

Cranfield University

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Bandenbekämpfung:

Nazi occupation security in Eastern Europe and Soviet Russia 1942-45.

Department of Defence Management & Security Analysis

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Supervised by:  
Professor E.R. Holmes

## **Abstract**

Bandenbekämpfung was a Nazi euphemism for the combating of guerrillas and partisans, and well-organised groups of resistance. It was a policy congruent to Nazi racial programmes (genocide and resettlement), and had the additional task of securing the economic exploitation of the occupied territories. During the Franco-Prussian War, the Prussians introduced a peculiar political-military security structure, the Etappe. This system gradually developed into a distinctive military administration, bureaucracy and culture. During the Second World War Hitler dispensed with the concept of the Etappe and imposed a series of measures in an effort to find the correct solution to secure his schemes for eastern colonisation (Lebensraum). Following the disastrous Russian winter campaign of 1941-42, the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich and the growth of allied commando raids and Soviet partisan incursions, Hitler introduced the doctrine of Bandenbekämpfung in 1942, commanded by Heinrich Himmler. By 1944 the Bandenkampfverbände, as it became known, had also formed its own distinctive bureaucratic culture. Initially, Bandenbekämpfung was the means to securing the Nazi colonial policy of Lebensraum. In this context it continued the punitive practice of the annihilation of Jews and political opponents as symbols of resistance to German rule. At the same time it became an agency by which Himmler engineered the SS-Police establishment into greater prominence within the overall war effort. Bandenbekämpfung was a shield behind which the SS continued the process of militarising the police, begun in 1936. From a broader perspective, it was a general operational policy that routinely allowed all the armed forces (including the SS) a high degree of freedom and flexibility in the employment of counter-insurgency measures; applied to all fronts and theatres of the war. In this context, the thesis has concentrated upon the Eastern Front. Thus the armed forces were no longer constrained by the laws of war. Finally, it was a cost effective instrument for the eradication of political and racial opponents within occupied countries. The practice of Bandenbekämpfung was not exclusively confined to the SS. To reinforce this opinion, the thesis considers the performance of a Luftwaffe Security Battalion across the period 1942 to 1944. The conclusion of this thesis is that Bandenbekämpfung was more than just a counter-insurgency policy; it was a Nazi security policy.

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## **Bibliographical abbreviations used in the references**

BA BL: Bundesarchiv, Berlin-Lichterfelde, (Berlin).

BA MA: Bundesarchiv Militärarchiv, (Freiburg).

BA ZNS: Bundesarchiv Zentralsachverhalt, Kornelimünster (Aachen).

BDC: Berlin Document Centre, collection of pre-war crimes trial files.

BZ-IMT: Bach-Zelewski evidence to the Nuremberg Tribunal process (date of interrogation follows e.g. 24th October 1945). Further details can be found in the bibliography.

BZ-USMT: Bach-Zelewski evidence to the US Military Trials 1946-1949 (date of interrogation follows e.g. 14th August 1946). Further details can be found in the bibliography.

CMH: Center for Military History, US Army, (Pennsylvania, USA).

DDSt: Deutsche Dienststelle, (Berlin), muster rolls from the Wehrmacht.

DKHH: Der Dienstkalender Heinrich Himmlers 1941/42, Forschungsstelle für Zeitgeschichte in Hamburg, (Hamburg, 1999). Heinrich Himmler's appointments diary.

FMS: US Army Historical Branch, Foreign Military Studies (German army).

IMT: International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg. Documents used in the trials from the NA or IWM collections.

IWM: Imperial War Museum, (London).

NA or NARA: National Archive, College Park annex, Washington DC.

N&P: J. Noakes & G. Pridham, Nazism 1919-1945: A Documentary Reader, 4 volumes.

RH: Bundesarchiv reference for the Heer (Army)

RL: Bundesarchiv reference for Luftwaffe (Air Force)

RS: Bundesarchiv reference for Waffen-SS.

RUSI: Royal United Services Institute, (London).

Table Talk: Martin Bormann's record of Hitler's views from mealtime discussions published as, Hugh Trevor-Roper (Intro.), Hitler's Table Talk, 1941-1944: His Private Conversations, (London, 1953).

TVDB: diary of SS-Obergruppenführer Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski's diary BA R20/45b.

USMT: US Military Tribunals, conducted after the main defendants trial at Nuremberg. There were twelve trials and a copy of their records is in the Imperial War Museum London (details in the bibliography, cited in the narrative USMT case 12).

Wiener: Wiener Library and archives, (London).

## **Introduction**

Here is a true story which could have happened in any land of a little group of free people who lived and loved and fought to drive the invaders from their native soil. One of the countless Guerrilla Bands who from secret hiding places in the swamps and the great forests lived days of impossible glory.<sup>1</sup>

The opening lines to the prologue of the film 'Days of Glory' echo the enduring legend of the Soviet guerrilla fighter. This legend has a wider European resonance, commonly retold by subsequent generations, of brave opposition to tyranny. The story usually describes the Germans as brutish and repressively short-sighted conquerors, who were overcome by an avalanche of resistance. The masses of brave civilians, who flooded the ranks of the partisans and resistors, aided by specialist allied troops, together expelled and finally destroyed Nazism. The allied powers purposefully promoted this vision, of swarms of partisans (Soviet or Yugoslav) or resistance fighters (French) persevering in the fight to the death against the massed ranks of the Nazi juggernaut. Today this image has been cast in stone, but, as with all such tales there is a fair sprinkling of both truth as well as make-believe. In regards to this research, these impressions of the war within the occupied territories no longer adequately explain the Nazi side of the story.

Reflecting upon this theme, our basic understanding of Nazi security policy seems flawed. What we have assumed for so long appears frail under academic examination. The widening breadth of research into the Third Reich, today, has further undermined this image of a Nazi juggernaut, indicating contradictions as to its size, the ability of its leadership, indeed even down to the direction it was taking. With due consideration for these new historical perspectives, the subject of this thesis is concerned with Nazi German occupation security policy, in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, namely, the doctrine of *Bandenbekämpfung*. This was the National Socialist security policy, introduced in 1942, in an attempt to finally realise Hitler's conception for the occupation of the east (*Lebensraum*). The historical range of this subject spans the period 1870 to 1945. With Nineteenth Century origins, its introduction in 1942 and a complete absence of the concept from post war literature constitute a deeply complex

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<sup>1</sup> The prologue to the film 'Days of Glory' made in 1945 by RKO and starring Gregory Peck as the leader of a Soviet Partisan band.

subject. In arriving at the conclusion to this research, some basic hurdles had first to be resolved.

The first involved coming to terms with what was meant by the word *Bandenbekämpfung*. Surprisingly, this word had not been judged important enough to warrant attention as to the Nazis own perception of the utilisation of this word. The translation from German offered two possible meanings. As an older legal term, it defined the policing of organised gangs or gangsters. A purely military form arose out of the war crimes process at Nuremberg (1945-49), where the tribunal interpreted it as the countering of insurgents such as partisans and guerrillas. This Nuremberg interpretation has been largely accepted without question until recently when historians have begun to unravel some of its Nazi political-ideological-economical overtones. The older, Imperial, German terminology, such as *Kleiner Krieg* (small war), *Partisanenkrieg* (partisan warfare) or *Freischärlerkampf* (irregular warfare), had remained in common usage until 1942. By the end of 1942, Hitler had introduced a doctrine and operational concept that criminalized all forms of resistance. *Bandenbekämpfung* became a Nazi euphemism that ordered all guerrillas, partisans and well-organised groups of resistance (including commandos in uniform) to be dealt with as criminals. Once *Bandenbekämpfung* became the official phraseology in 1942, the older terms virtually disappeared from the German vocabulary.

The next hurdle involved determining *Bandenbekämpfung*'s function within the overall war effort. This was a little more difficult to judge as, at any time, it embraced the actions associated with counter-insurgency, policing, internal security, anti-partisan warfare, enslavement, colonial conquest and genocide. There was no definite conclusion as to which of these was most prominent, as the balance between them varied depending upon the situation. It was, however, concluded that the policy of *Bandenbekämpfung* was concerned with four central aspects of the war effort: *Lebensraum*, genocide, security for the army's rear-area and economic exploitation. Likewise, in the rapidly changing closing years of the war it was impossible to isolate which of these took priority. The penultimate concerned the analysis of the organisation and the administration of *Bandenbekämpfung*. This involved piecing together a picture of the organisation for *Bandenbekämpfung* from a myriad of diverse sources that could not always be concluded due to gaps in the records. The accumulated effort of these

findings led to three central assumptions. Firstly, Bandenbekämpfung was the means of securing the Nazi colonial policy of Lebensraum. Secondly, it became a tool for Himmler to engineer the SS-Police establishment into prominence within the war effort. Finally, it was an all embracing policy that routinely allowed all the armed forces (including the SS) a high degree of freedom and flexibility in the employment of counter-insurgency measures, in other words the armed forces were no longer constrained by the laws of war. The collective findings of this thesis, which in places might repulse, illustrate the character of this policy.

## **I. The Literature**

With the Second World War, there came the great upsurge in the fortunes of guerrilla warfare. Hitler's predicament resembled Napoleon's insofar as his forces were dispersed all over Europe and his lines of communication and routes of supply overextended and vulnerable. Like Napoleon before, the Germans had insufficient forces to impose full control on all the occupied territories or even to destroy partisan concentrations.<sup>2</sup>

From the moment the Second World War ended, research into the German war effort began to grow in abundance. This was partly fuelled by the public interest in the nation that had brought the world to the brink of apocalypse and partly due to the rise in Cold War tensions and the subsequent interest in the capabilities of the Red Army. The amount of work devoted to the study of the Soviet partisan was considerable in the 1950s and 1960s. Inevitably, these studies focused upon the capability and effectiveness of the partisans in fighting and unsettling the German army. In 1956, the Center for Military History (US Army) published a study on the Soviet Partisans.<sup>3</sup> It was at the time an advanced work based upon captured German records, consultant studies of ex-German officers and a small collection of post war literature. The style was informative, with evaluations based upon soldierly assessment of the military records. The authors recognised the changes in German security policy including the transformation into Bandenbekämpfung. However, they ascribed it to Hitler and the OKW. In a short reference to Heinrich Himmler, the work acknowledged both his central authority and the implementation of his own guidelines for security.<sup>4</sup> Beyond that, they returned to the German army emphasis of the anti-partisan campaign, albeit recognising the reality

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<sup>2</sup> Walter Laqueur, *Guerrilla: A historical and critical study*, (London, 1977), p383.

<sup>3</sup> US Army, CMH Pub 104-19, *The Soviet Partisan Movement 1941-1944*, (Washington DC, 1956).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pp 117-118.

and rationalisation behind the policy changes in 1942. Later, during the 1950s, Dixon and Heilbrunn published their work that recognised the security sophistication of *Bandenbekämpfung*, and reproduced considerable parts of the 1944 manual.<sup>5</sup> Other works like those of Gerald Reitlinger and Alexander Dallin focused upon Nazi war crimes in the east, which was largely ignored by the military history schools.<sup>6</sup> Both authors produced thoughtful and still relevant interpretations of the partisan war. Many more studies obligingly followed the pleadings of German veterans, who maintained their innocence of committing war crimes, and confirmed a view that the severe treatment of the partisans was due to the absence of any protection under laws of war, rather than the failure of moral or civilised constraint. Thus the way was open for the polarisation of genres, which today embeds the differences between historical schools.

In 1960, John Armstrong and colleagues published what became the classical study of the Soviet partisan.<sup>7</sup> They identified three distinct stages in the development of the Soviet partisan. The first stage of June-December 1941, covered the activation of partisan units, and the existence of any plans before Stalin's speech of July 1941, that had called for a general uprising. The next stage, between December 1941 and autumn 1942, was regarded as the rebuilding phase, bridging the period of the two strategic German defeats at the gates of Moscow and Stalingrad. Finally, the last phase, from autumn 1942 and ending in the summer of 1944, saw intense partisan activity with operations stretching across all German rear areas. The partisan 'roving bands' were the distinct feature of this period. Armstrong was more sweeping about German intentions:

Hitler's overriding objective of destroying Soviet military power within a very short time meant that the German command regarded the partisans as crucially important only insofar as they impeded the German war effort...The vast stretches of occupied Europe between Germany itself and German armies at the front were important only as a necessary avenue of communication and a source of materials (including forced labour) for pursuing the war.<sup>8</sup>

He went on to suggest that because of these objectives the Germans were not compelled by the normal constraints facing anti-guerrilla forces:

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<sup>5</sup> Dixon, Aubrey and Heilbrunn, Otto, *Communist Guerrilla Warfare*, (London, 1954).

<sup>6</sup> Alexander Dallin, *German Rule in Russia, 1941-1945: A Study of Occupation Policies*, (New York, 1957) and Gerald Reitlinger, *The House Built on Sand*, (New York, 1960)

<sup>7</sup> John Armstrong, *Soviet Partisans in World War II*, (Wisconsin, 1964).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p6.

Secure control of territory, allegiance of the population, maintenance of institutional patterns or the traditional social system did not per se interest the German authorities.... If the course of military operations produced chaos which reduced the numbers and social viability of the Slavs, so much the better...<sup>9</sup>

At all stages of his analysis, Armstrong offered only one consistency of the Germans, brutality and terror. His one-track thesis could not distinguish between the different kinds of security policy, for example, military and political policing. According to Armstrong it came down to a fine line that distinguished the behaviour between the two sides:

The combination of Soviet and German objectives produced a situation in which measures of almost unparalleled ruthlessness became the norm of guerrilla and anti-guerrilla warfare alike.... For the German anti-guerrillas, ruthlessness became not only a practical norm, but a rule.... Apart from individual instances of sadism, Soviet partisan activity was guided not by desire to inflict suffering, but the disregard of suffering, which was viewed as “necessary” for war purposes. Frequently the practical distinction between the two types of motivations was not very evident, however.<sup>10</sup>

In 1976, Keith Simpson approached the theme from the German perspective and as a security issue.<sup>11</sup> He straightaway dispensed with the distortions in the history:

However, much of the German and Soviet interpretations since the war have been based on distortions and myths, with each side using generalisations and a selective analysis to underline political and military doctrines or to excuse political and military defeats. For the Soviet Union, partisan warfare became a useful distraction to cloak the early disasters of the war, whilst for the former German High Command, the problems of Rear Area Security became the excuse for military defeat at the front.<sup>12</sup>

Simpson was the first to bring together Germany's traditions and security. He briefly mentioned the periodic influences of 1870-71 and 1914-18. He noted the long periods of occupation during the First World War and referred to the administration and bureaucracy that controlled the rear-areas, identifying the so-called military governments. Unlike many predecessors, he was prepared to accept that not all German methods failed:

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, pp6-7.

<sup>10</sup> Armstrong, p7.

<sup>11</sup> Keith Simpson, 'The German Experience of Rear Area Security on the Eastern Front 1941-45', *RUSI Journal*, (December 1976), pp39-46.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p39.

In the Franco-Prussian War 1870-71, the Prussian Army had been unpleasantly surprised by the opposition it met from French irregular franc-tireurs who had harried the German lines of communication... The German army viewed irregular warfare both in the Franco-Prussian War and World War I as illegitimate and took quick and ruthless action against those concerned, with additional reprisals against sympathisers. Generally, this was a very effective method.<sup>13</sup>

Simpson also recognised the period of Weimar Germany as important in providing new experiences in the development of internal security:

The period of the Weimar Republic is important in any understanding of German attitudes towards Rear Area Security and Internal Security, because of the polarisation in politics between nationalists and communists, the weaknesses of the central government and the need to establish an effective police force which was capable of maintaining internal security, and, in addition, reinforcing the small 100,000 man Reichswehr in a military role. Both the Reichswehr and the paramilitary *Schutzpolizei* gained experience from internal security operations during the communist uprisings of 1918 and 1923.<sup>14</sup>

Simpson realised that the Russian campaign was essentially a racial conflict, suggesting that SS responsibility for rear area security reflected the very nature of the campaign. He saw the agreements between the army and the SS, and the drafting of the Barbarossa directives, as synonymous with the style of war being practised. In spite of these preparations he believed the Germans had not prepared themselves for a long military campaign, nor had they prepared their forces for a protracted anti-partisan conflict. There were other factors that Simpson recognised as crucial to the construction of German rear area security. They included the intelligence functions (including radio intercepts), local residents as sources of information, the control of civilian movements, civilian agents, or V-men (VertrauensMänner), who were enlisted and used by the security police. Information enabled the Germans to conduct anti-partisan sweeps, which, after 1942, usually involved the small tactical units called Jagdkommandos. He recognised the role of the Luftwaffe in bringing reconnaissance information to the ground forces, as well as supplying aerial strikes against the partisans and using fighters to prevent their resupply. Simpson went on to mention the lack of a German training manual until 1944, but noticed that once it was written it reflected the dual methods,

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p39.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p39.

policing (defensive tactics) and military (aggressive action). He identified the growing synthesis between policing and the military, the core of German security policy thinking since 1918, when he said the military manual, 'concluded that the good anti-partisan leader had to combine military and police qualifications.'

In 1977, Matthew Cooper conducted a general analysis that compared both German and Soviet policies.<sup>15</sup> Instead of advancing upon Simpson's findings, Cooper stifled the process. At first glance, it is not altogether clear why this should have happened. He chose to approach six important themes; the development of German security policy; the purpose behind the rule of Terror; the differences between 'passive' and 'active' security; the role of the collaborators; questions of success and failure; and, the identification of the leading characters. It looked a well-researched book, and for over twenty years, it was the only substantial work on German security policy. On closer inspection, it was apparent that Cooper had looked at too few documents, especially relying upon instructions to armies in the field and army group level orders, and not general policy statements. Cooper was unsuccessful because of his indecision as to whether security was part of mainstream Nazi policy, or just was an adjunct of military operations. There was no recognition of the subtle changes in German policy, and their impact upon security operations. This expressed itself in the complete failure to isolate the legalistic change imposed by Hitler, with the *Bandenbekämpfung* directive, and its addendum, known as the 'Commando Order'.

For Germany, the 1950s and 1960s were periods of difficult readjustment. Politically divided, the central theatre of the Cold War, youth and student irascibility with the older generations' unwillingness to be open about Nazism, cross border accusation of government employment of war criminals, spates of war crime prosecution, primarily forced by the revealing details of the proceedings from the Eichmann Trial, in Jerusalem, and the life imprisonment of Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, were the backdrop for groundbreaking works. The historiography was permanently changed with the publication of *Anatomie des SS Staates*, (1965).<sup>16</sup> This

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<sup>15</sup> Matthew Cooper, *The Phantom War: The German Struggle against Soviet Partisans*, (London, 1977).

<sup>16</sup> Krausnick, Helmut, Hans Buchheim, Martin Broszat, Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, *Anatomie des SS-Staates*, (1965). Subsequently translated and published in English, *Anatomy of the SS State*, (1968). This book remains the most authoritative work on the SS. Hans Buchheim provided several significant sections on the SS including the development of its structure, the idea of the existence of an SS mentality and the difficult issue of compliance to criminal orders. Martin Broszat discussed the subject of the concentration



was a collaborative undertaking of four leading German historians who had been working with the West German authorities on the Auschwitz trial in Frankfurt, in 1963. Hans Buchheim dealt with the difficult subjects of compliance to criminal orders and the mentality of the SS. He identified the period after 1918, with the advent of the Freikorps, as a 'perverted version of German militarism'; the end of the Prusso-German military tradition. The issue of a peculiar SS mentality was a particularly difficult theme to approach as there had been regular outpourings since the end of the war on its existence.<sup>17</sup> Buchheim referred to a quotation by Dr. Werner Best as an insight into the SS and its psychological attachment to fighting, the so-called 'heroic realism'. Best had first written about this concept back in 1930, as a contribution to a book edited by Ernst Jünger, and in which he justified his abstraction:

The important point is not what we fight for, but how we fight... Anyone can fight in the expectation that he will win or that *the good cause* will one day triumph. Such a man believes in an ultimate aim and so the fight becomes tolerable to him. The criterion of the new mental attitude, on the other hand, is the acceptance of a fight in a lost position for a lost cause; the essence is to fight a good fight; whether it is for a good cause or whether it is successful, matters little.<sup>18</sup>

These metaphysical constructs of heroic fighting were popular throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and served to underpin a considerable soldierly conscience within the mentality of the Nazis and the SS. However, as Buchheim pointed out, whilst 'heroic realism' represented the roving independent warrior, the SS man was limited by executive sanctions and demands for his services:

The "heroic fighter" was in fact simply a man who was prepared to allow himself to be used for any purpose and who was both sufficiently ruthless and sufficiently energetic to carry out successfully any mission assigned to him. There is nothing so remarkable about this; after all the men who blossomed in the SS were simply average present-day human beings.<sup>19</sup>

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camps from 1933 to 1945. Hans-Adolf Jacobsen considered the issue of criminal orders from the onset of operation Barbarossa. Jacobsen was interested in providing evidence that in the east it was not a normal war but an ideological and genocidal war. Helmut Krausnick worked on the persecution of the Jews from origins of National Socialist (NS) anti-Semitism, pinpointing the influence of social Darwinism on Nazi race ideology.

<sup>17</sup> On this theme refer to Eugen Kogon, *The Theory and Practice of Hell*, (1947) and Elie Cohen, *Human Behaviour in the Concentration Camp*, (1954).

<sup>18</sup> Krausnick et al, pp323-324, from Ernst Jünger, *Krieg und Krieger*, (1930).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, pp329-330.

He concluded that, in fact, 'heroic realism' and 'pragmatism' were brought together into a bureaucratic management concept that Himmler worshipped – achievement and efficiency. Buchheim blamed the Nazi dual concept behind the 'political soldier' i.e. the soldier by political conviction and the man who felt he was a soldier behaving in politics as if he was at war. The rhetoric of warlike orders to the SS men on the streets, a mixture of political-military terminology, confused the boundaries of law. Thus, the blind obedience associated with the SS, as political soldiers, was conducted without concern for the rule of law. This of course raised questions of how the Wehrmacht maintained its traditions in a state of Nazi fervour. This question of politics between the SS and the Wehrmacht remained a problem. As the *SS-Leithefte* stated in 1942:

In the past politics and the Wehrmacht have unfortunately often pursued divergent paths. The Waffen-SS provides the first example of indissoluble unity between the two, in that concept and sword are welded into one and political determination brings such strength to the soldier's sword that it becomes invincible... A decision to join the Führer's military force is equally nothing less than the expression of a voluntary determination to continue the present political struggle upon another level.<sup>20</sup>

The impact of Krausnick and his colleagues was to make the earlier analysis of the SS as the monolithic top down organisation redundant. They removed a lot of the bogus mystery behind the SS, but, still, post-war myths remained. They raised the level of scholarship in the research of the SS. Their work opened up a matrix of viewpoints from the political, ideological, legal, structural and moral.

It was in the 1980s and 1990s that research began to expose the depth of Nazi ideas and Nazism within German society. The groundwork began with Christian Streit's revelations in 1975 of German army guilt in the deliberate killing of Red Army prisoners of war.<sup>21</sup> Omer Bartov found evidence of the German army's compliance with, and embrace of, National Socialism in the ideological war in the east.<sup>22</sup> Recently, there has been some focus on the role of the German army in the partisan war; these have concentrated upon its war crimes and participation in genocide. Truman Anderson conducted a study into the German 162<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division and the anti-partisan

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, pp314-315. The *SS-Leithefte* was one of many in-house SS journals.

<sup>21</sup> Christian Streit, *Keine Kameraden: Die Wehrmacht und die sowjetischen Kriegsgefangenen 1941-1945*, (Stuttgart, 1978).

<sup>22</sup> Omer Bartov, *The Eastern Front, 1941-1945: German troops and the Barbarisation of Warfare*, (London, 1986); and, *Hitler's Army: Soldiers, Nazis and War in the Third Reich*, (London, 1992).

campaign.<sup>23</sup> He chose to emphasise the trend set by Streit and Bartov focusing directly upon the nature and number of German crimes. This dismantling of the Wehrmacht's image culminated in the controversies raised by Hannes Heer. He combined wartime photographs and innovative historical research into a travelling exhibition, exposing Wehrmacht war crimes. Entitled 'Vernichtungskrieg. Verbrechen der Wehrmacht' (war of destruction and crimes), the exhibition caused riots in the streets of Germany as left and right wing political groups battled over the moral standing of the German army.<sup>24</sup> The subsequent 'banishment' of Hannes Heer, on the flimsiest grounds of mistakenly describing a handful of photographs from among many thousands, suggests a victory for the revisionary circles, which believe the honour of the Wehrmacht outweighs the tons of contrary evidence.<sup>25</sup> These shameful developments can only help the cause of revisionism in Germany.

A new phase in the development of the literature was opened by Christopher Browning's extremely harrowing account of the activities of a police battalion in Eastern Europe. The book highlighted the breadth of different units assigned to duties including genocide and who the men were.<sup>26</sup> He was concerned with the issue of ordinary men and their propensity to participate in mass murder. Browning referred to the battalion commander who was shocked and tearful when he told his men, while stationed in Józefów, in Poland, that they were there to murder Jews. He identified an absence of strong leadership, no proximity to brutalisation by war or SS coercion in the field, insignificant career enhancement, and a modicum of racial propaganda, and yet these policemen apparently still murdered large numbers of defenceless Jews. Browning applied the findings of the Stanford prison model, the racialism that emerged from out of the war in the Pacific Theatre (1941-1945), and the thoughts of Primo Levi, to explain why ordinary men kill.<sup>27</sup> Browning discovered the files for his case in the

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<sup>23</sup> Truman O. Anderson, 'The Conduct of Reprisals by the German Army of Occupation in the South Ukraine', University of Chicago, PhD, (1995).

<sup>24</sup> Heer, Hannes, and Klaus Naumann, *Vernichtungskrieg. Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941 bis 1944*, (Hamburg, 1995). The exhibition was named after the book 'War of Destruction, the crimes of the Wehrmacht'.

<sup>25</sup> The discovery of 2 or 3 suspect photographs (out of total of 1,500) was enough to close down the exhibition and prevented it from travelling to New York. In a conversation with Hannes Heer in March 2000 he suggested it was the revenge of those considerable and growing numbers in Germany, who wish to avoid the truth of the past.

<sup>26</sup> Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, (London, 1993), chapter 18.

<sup>27</sup> Browning read John Dower's, *War without mercy*, (New York, 1989).

Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen in Ludwigsburg. In 1968, this same organisation had published a report on the killing of partisans in the Second World War.<sup>28</sup> This was the Federal Republic's bureau that handled investigations into war crimes.

Michael Burleigh, who has written on the racial nature of the Nazi State, has shown that the traditional image of the SS has not been entirely extinguished.<sup>29</sup> He has been concerned with the role of Nazis eugenics in the style first begun by Krausnick and his colleagues. However, the appearance of Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's book, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, in 1996 that turned the historical establishment on its head for a brief period.<sup>30</sup> Goldhagen took Browning's theme and approached the evidence from an entirely different angle. He expounded a suspicion, long dismissed by leading historians, that the Nazis had awakened a character trait of the German people, 'eliminationist anti-semitism'. Goldhagen exchanged 'Nazi' for 'German' and he devalued the status of the SS as the principle killers, preferring to cast blame on the whole of German society for race murder. He attacked Browning for failing to go beyond convention. The response to Goldhagen within the field of German history was remarkable with equal amounts of deprecation and support. The published seminar papers of the conference held at Freiburg University, in 1996, and the recent Norman Finkelstein work, suggests that this debate is going to continue.<sup>31</sup>

That left the less controversial but none the less highly professional approach of historians like Jürgen Förster. He has researched the German war aims in terms of the concept of *Lebensraum* to begin to explain Nazi policy during the invasion of Russia.<sup>32</sup> Förster's concept of the Nazi attempt to secure *Lebensraum*, as the basis of doctrine, is a major thread throughout this thesis. Finally, we come to the work of two recently

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<sup>28</sup> Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen in Ludwigsburg, 'Geisel- und Partisanentötungen im zweiten Weltkrieg: Hinweise zur rechtlichen Beurteilung', (1968).

<sup>29</sup> Michael Burleigh, *Ethics and Extermination*, (London, 1997), p166. Burleigh wrote of the SS, 'Inspired by Himmler's eccentric and ahistorical understanding of a number of elite organisations, the sole task of the SS-whose creed was mindless obedience-was to destroy the regime's opponents, understood to include those who threatened the integrity or security of the 'master race'.

<sup>30</sup> Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, (London, 1996).

<sup>31</sup> Ulrich, Herbert, *Nationalsozialistische Vernichtungspolitik, Neue Forschungen und Kontroversen*, (1998). These published lectures highlight how far research has come in explaining Nazism and that simple answers are not satisfactory in this complex subject. Norman Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry*, (London, 2000).

<sup>32</sup> Jürgen Förster, 'Securing 'Living-Space'', in Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (Ed), *Germany and the Second World War: The attack on the Soviet Union, Volume 4*, (Oxford, 1998), pp1189-1243.

published scholars, Wolfgang Kahl and Christian Gerlach. Kahl, is a German police official, who has questioned the myths and legends surrounding Bandenbekämpfung within the confines of an article.<sup>33</sup> He makes the point that the concept of Bandenbekämpfung was itself a myth because it disguised the real actions of the SS, Police and Wehrmacht. As a word, it enabled the continuation of the war of destruction under euphemistic terminology. The structure of Kahl's argument is essentially correct but the basis of his conclusions does not completely answer the greater problem of why Bandenbekämpfung was introduced in the first place. If it had been employed to disguise the programmes of the Einsatzgruppen and the mass killing it would have been used from the beginning. Alternatively, if it were to disguise the process of killing then surely the older term of Partisanenkampf would have sufficed? It was used to excuse the killing of Jews; Jews that resisted genocide, as it was essentially a term to eradicate guerrillas, partisans and uprisings. In this sense, it had a greater impact upon the wider impact of the war of destruction (Vernichtungskrieg). Christian Gerlach has recently stormed onto the scene with an in depth study of the occupation of central Russia (referred to as Russland-Mitte and Weissruthenia by the SS).<sup>34</sup> At over one thousand pages, it is quite the definitive assessment of a German occupation zone in Russia, or any other territory. Gerlach presents a good deal of information and, as a reference book, and a means to checking one's findings, it is superb. Its interpretation of events is less dynamic. Originally, it was a doctoral thesis, with almost two hundred pages committed to the chapter on partisan warfare. Yet, this chapter did not raise the interpretation of the subject, rather immersing it into masses of figures of killing and destruction. It was noticeable that there was little attempt at explaining, for example, why German policy, on one day saw the killing of 14,000 people with the taking of one prisoner, and, on another day, taking many thousands of prisoners but killing only a handful. His earlier publication was a lot more interesting in its three studies; the killing of Red Army prisoners, the Jews and the impact of the Wannsee conference.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Wolfgang Kahl, 'Vom myθος der Bandenbekämpfung: polizeiverbände im zweiten weltkrieg', (Die Polizei. Zentralorgan für das Sicherheits- und Ordnungswesen, Heft 2/ 1998), pp 47-55.

<sup>34</sup> Christian Gerlach, *Kalkulierte Morde: Die deutsche Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik in Weissrussland 1941 bis 1944*, (Hamburg, 1999).

<sup>35</sup> Christian Gerlach, *Krieg, Ernährung, Völkermord: Forschungen zur deutschen Vernichtungspolitik im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, (Hamburg, 1998).

## II. Thesis Structure and Use of Sources

In the words of Tim Mason, 'All good written history begins at the end'.<sup>36</sup> The first chapter of this thesis looks at the origins and traditions of German security policy that existed before the introduction of *Bandenbekämpfung*. Examples from German history are used to provide a cross-sectional analysis of the origins of security policy. In chapter two, the rise of an alternative internal security is identified following the collapse of Germany in 1919. The twin forces of genocide and security are the themes of chapter three and how the Nazis began to formulate their own concept of security. In chapter four, the doctrine, the language and the culture of the *Bandenbekämpfung*, which was instilled into the troops, are identified. The issue of general manpower policy is discussed in chapter five, again from the perspective of the *Bandenbekämpfung* directive itself.

In chapter six, an examination of the security services is set against the backdrop of the declining German fortunes in the war. This represents the watershed chapter of the thesis because the following chapters generally concern *Bandenbekämpfung* in practice. Chapter seven is a study of leadership as defined by German security specialists and in particular Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski and Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck. The operational character of *Bandenbekämpfung* is the theme of chapter eight which interprets German assessment of success through early management concepts of 'time and motion' practices. The full implications of *Bandenbekämpfung* are the central issue of chapter nine when we focus upon the men on the ground carrying out routine security duties. Finally, we come to chapter ten and the end of the war with the full gravity of Nazi methods and the destruction of Warsaw.

There appears to be no convention in the literature as to whether or not to cite frame numbers from National Archive microfilm. Similarly, there is no convention to cite the document number of captured German files now returned to Germany. Again, the personnel files in America and Germany do not have reference numbers. Therefore, this thesis will refer to microfilm origin (i.e. T175, RFSS personal files), role number and document details and, where applicable, frame number.<sup>37</sup> This will be continued

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<sup>36</sup> Tim Mason, *Social Policy in the Third Reich: The working class and the National Community*, (Berg 1997). p1.

<sup>37</sup> Some microfilms have no frame number like the Deluege series at the NA, numbered T580. In other cases the number can be unreadable. Every effort has been made to clarify the data if a frame number is

with the use of other microfiche or films. German documents will not include the US documentation number; only the archive, file and document date. The translations of documents as presented into the Nuremberg courts remain uncorrected. To ensure full disclosure and assist students in the future, the complete range of the research, file and any frame numbers can be found in the bibliography.

### **Chapter One: German Occupation Security Policy 1871-1918**

It is not sufficient to justify the arbitrary and ruthless reprisal policy of the German army in Russia, Serbia and Greece by stressing the need for the security of the soldier against partisan warfare. Nor can it be explained by the fact that German military doctrine since 1871 had advocated policies of indiscriminate retaliation and of preventative repression as the best means of checking partisan activity. Total exoneration of the army is no more of an aid towards understanding of this chapter in German history than is its total condemnation.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter forms an analysis of German occupation security policy between 1871 and 1918. The intention behind this is to identify the central thrust and the significant transformations in the development of its practice. The chapter opens with an overview of the nature of occupation and the laws of war. The second section, focuses specifically on the development of the German security tradition. The analysis opens with that of the 1870 model of occupation imposed during the Franco-Prussian War. This is followed by a brief overview of the impact German colonialism played in transforming security thinking. The German colonial conflicts of 1885 to 1919, were played out within a climate of international rivalry and Great Power one-upmanship. The colonial example is taken from the Herero Uprising of 1904. This section conclude will with an assessment of the German army's occupation methods during the First World War. Here we begin to identify the consistent patterns of action that were repeated during the Second World War. The combination of the older security methods, the changing conditions of warfare and the vast territorial theatres of war, provided the stimulation behind the creation of a complex security philosophy.

A process of modernisation arose in parallel with this philosophy through the application of new technology and a growth in the security bureaucracy. Certain common traits ran like a thread through German security practices. Together these changes can be identified by the style of administration the Germans preferred, as well as the choice of organisations and forces employed in the occupation process. The outcome suggested that the typical vertical 'top down-bottom up' administration was overlaid by a horizontal, functional structure intended to extend operations across territories. At some point these two streams of organisation met to erect a security

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<sup>1</sup> Jurgen Forster, 'The Relation between Barbarossa as an ideological war of extermination and the Final Solution', in David Cesarini, *The Final Solution, Origins and Implementation*, (London, 1994), p97.



structure with ordered functions and methods. At the head of this structure was the chief of staff of the army who took charge of the administration of an occupation, and, was responsible for the day-to-day management of the army. This bureaucratization inevitably formed a complex administration with structured policy-making and large troop formations to implement occupation. Today, those detailed to occupation duties cannot always be identified from the remaining records.

### **I. Occupation: A German Perspective**

The greatest problem to overcome in the study of occupation and security policy lies in the subjective nature of the terminology. This partly stems from the seemingly unlimited power that an army of occupation can wield:

It is the military's naked use of coercive power for political ends, and is the one that most attracts disapprobation, even in those instances where the military is seen as a revolutionary force.<sup>2</sup>

Although there has been a considerable amount of literature devoted to the study of the laws of war, the concept of occupation has received less than its fair share of academic attention. While there have been specific studies of an occupation (such as the Roman occupations) or legal studies of occupation, there has been little research into the general theory and practice of occupation, especially from the historical standpoint. Historians have tended to accept the term at face value, thereby assuming that occupations remain constant. There is as yet no standard model or structure on which to build a general conclusion.

A further problem that arises from the examination of occupation is the difficulty of identifying specific common features. Whether these include particular nationalistic traits, procedural factors of occupation, military characteristics, or an administrative style, there is very little academic definition or ring fencing of the processes or behaviour patterns involved. As a consequence it is extremely difficult to judge how far one occupation was worse than any other. Thus the usual generalisations remain constant, to the occupied it was an odious experience, whereas the occupiers tend to believe they introduced some value, such as enlightenment, revolution or welfare. It is in this field that Eric Carlton has made a considerable step toward conceptualising war and occupation. He has done this through two studies, one that linked 'War and Ideology'

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<sup>2</sup> Martin Edmonds, *Armed Services and Society*, (Leicester, 1988), p19.

and the other 'Occupation'.<sup>3</sup> The central theme of his work is the combination of ideology and social control as the driving forces behind occupation. He refers to the crucial question at the heart of occupation, 'Successful conquerors, imperialists, and sundry would-be expansionists face a common problem: they take what they can get - but how do they keep what they take?'<sup>4</sup>

The general hypothesis of Carlton's work is both helpful and important in the theoretical study of German security. In his opinion war is more than just the consequences of political and economic expediency, but about the application of ideology. His argument regarding the relationship between war and ideology is balanced upon the simple equation of 'belief and action' and the concept of 'perceptions of the enemy'. There is of course a high degree of qualitative if not subjective assumptions to his ideas. In terms of occupation, Carlton's ideas follow social scientific patterns of analysis. He suggests that, 'The policies and practices of occupation are merely one aspect of the problem of social control generally.'<sup>5</sup> Rather than to rely upon a single historical example he chose ten different occupations stretching from the Roman Empire through to Nazi Germany. He believed that a common thread can be identified in the application of power through the implementation of social control. In doing so, he raised questions over the impact of control and ideology within occupation:

All occupying powers, must employ mechanisms which will ensure control in some form or another, and these will be affected by the circumstances existing in any one place at any one time, and by the respective ideologies of the powers themselves. This begs the question as to whether ideologies condition policy, or whether conditions determine the nature of the ideologies?'<sup>6</sup>

The question of social control is shown by Carlton to be linked to fundamental behaviour patterns of conformity and socialisation. In explaining this within the context of occupation, he states:

As a necessary back up to the ideology, there must be a system of terrorist police control, which utilizes the technical, biochemical and psychological techniques available to modern science. Coercion is exercised where necessary and without compunction against demonstrable enemies of the

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<sup>3</sup> Eric Carlton, *Occupation: The policies and practices of military conquerors*, (London, 1992).

<sup>4</sup> Eric Carlton, *War and Ideology*, (London, 1990).

<sup>5</sup> Carlton, *Occupation*, p6

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, pVII.

state, and even when appropriate against arbitrarily selected sections or classes of the population.<sup>7</sup>

Occupation can form a unique series of studies into the contradictions and dichotomies of human behaviour; and, as such, it can propose infinite possibilities. A pattern of behaviour much maligned and equally misunderstood is that of collaboration. Werner Rings identified several common features in the occupations of the Second World War.<sup>8</sup> In the case of collaboration, Rings identified four levels, all of them intensely moralistic. Carlton also raised the other topic within occupation, collaboration. In Carlton's opinion collaboration can only be scrutinised subjectively, 'Scrutinising and scrutinised. Active collaboration, from officials down to the cellblock trusty, can only be to the advantage of the system.'<sup>9</sup> Yet collaboration became a central component of the German system of occupation. In later chapters it will be shown just how far the Germans relied upon collaboration within their general theory of occupation.

To contain his model of occupation Carlton introduced terminology to classify the different types of occupation. For example, he used 'assimilation' to explain the Roman Empire's methods, 'exploitation' by the Spanish in Peru, and 'subjugation' by Europeans of the native peoples of North America. In his interpretation(s) of Nazi occupation, however, Carlton chose to differentiate between geography and race. Carlton ascribed 'Selective Control' to define the occupied areas outside of Eastern Europe. For those occupations of the 'east', he used the term 'extermination' and his explanation of the genocide of the Jews, 'excursus'. This level of categorisation can prove to be both helpful and restrictive. The terms chosen to describe an occupation can be critical and in this context, the scope of our existing language effectively constrains the formulation of an adequate explanation. In this sense, Carlton's road to 'excursus' stresses a logical straight (historical) road to the conclusion of extermination. This was to convenient and not an altogether realistic argument. Carlton's choice of examples conveniently allowed him to demonstrate the elements of social control, power, and socialisation. He also passed comment on the importance of law in the process of occupation stating, 'It is extremely difficult for conqueror and resistant alike to temper national interest with

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p178.

<sup>8</sup> Werner Rings, *Life with the enemy: Collaboration and Resistance in Hitler's Europe 1939-1945*, (London, 1979).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p177.

mercy...It is very doubtful whether warfare can really be made more humane by rules. Of course, the wish to make rules is human – but the decision to break them is all too human.’<sup>10</sup> Again, Carlton was too glib with the issue of law as he had been with collaboration. He failed to distinguish the natural laws of human behaviour (the drive to survive) and the laws imposed by civilisation.

Law, however, has dominated the question of occupation and the conduct of war. In 1862, Francis (Franz) Lieber codified for the first time what became the international laws (code of conduct) of war and occupation. This remained the basic legal-philosophical theory behind war and occupation prior to 1945. It was during the American Civil War that the codification and classification of the rules of modern war were first formalised. The Union Army employed a highly sophisticated system of military occupation that had to contend with deeply political problems. During and after the war the Union Army utilised a variety of measures to counteract guerrillas, to suppress civilian resistance and to bring stability once again to the nation. It was in the greater effort to justify a process that the Union Army had turned to Francis Lieber to formulate a code of behaviour. The impact of Lieber’s principles were gradually assumed by governments and written into military ordinances.<sup>11</sup> There were four distinct elements to the Lieber philosophy, the institution of martial law, the legal classification of belligerents, the function of security (distinguishing between the securing of the occupying army and the pacification of the occupied territory), and the moral and legal status of the defeated nation and its inhabitants. His concepts were finely balanced between military necessity and political expediency, and between morality and law. The Lieber Code was the essence of Nineteenth Century nationalism, set against the backdrop of the industrialisation of warfare, and the promulgation of the spirit of an exclusive military professionalism.

The fundamental thread of the code was legality, encapsulated in his general thoughts on the concept of martial law:

A territory under military occupation automatically falls under martial law.  
The presence of a hostile army proclaims its martial law.... Martial law in a

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p144.

<sup>11</sup> Francis Lieber, *Guerrilla Parties considered with reference to the Laws and Usages of War*, written at the request of Major-General Henry W. Halleck, (USA, 1862); for the specific study of Lieber and his work see Richard Shelly Hartigan, *Lieber’s Code and the Law of War*, (Chicago, 1983). Hartigan reprinted the General Order No. 100, known as the Lieber Code.

hostile country suspends criminal and civil law as well as civil administration. They are replaced by military law and rule.... Martial law is simply military authority exercised in accordance with the laws and usages of war.... As martial law is executed by military force, it is incumbent upon those who administer it to be strictly guided by the principles of justice, honour and humanity – virtues adorning a soldier even more than other men, for the very reason that he possesses the power of his arms against the unarmed.... Military courts will administer martial law.... Military jurisdiction is made up of common law and military law. Peace is the objective of modern war...The more vigorously wars are pursued the better it is for humanity. Sharp wars are brief.<sup>12</sup>

In some respects Lieber was trying to enhance military professionalism in both the application and administration of war. With this end in mind, he attempted to rationalise the central aspects of war, victory, occupation, and conquest. In doing so he chose to distinguish the differences between the belligerent and the non-belligerent, 'All enemies in regular war are divided into two general classes that is to say, into combatants and non-combatants, or unarmed citizens of the hostile government.'<sup>13</sup>

Lieber generally accepted the legal status of the role of the partisan in warfare:

Partisans are soldiers armed and wearing the uniform of their army, but belonging to a corps, which acts detached from the main body for the purpose of making inroads into the territory occupied by the enemy. If captured they are entitled to all the privileges of the prisoner of war.'<sup>14</sup>

This concept of the partisan was consistent with the prevailing precedents of war practised by all national armies.<sup>15</sup> His conclusions toward the guerrilla, however, were in great contrast to those of the partisan. For Lieber the guerrilla represented little more than a common criminal. He could only equate the consequences of the guerrilla's methods to the horrors of the Thirty Years War adding, 'So much is certain, that no army, no society, engaged in war, any more than a society at peace, can allow unpunished assassination, robbery, and devastation, without the deepest injury to itself

<sup>12</sup> Hartigan, General Order, section I, points 1, 3, 5, 12, 13, and 29.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, section I, points 2.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, section IV, partisans, armed enemies' point 81.

<sup>15</sup> In 1881, The Royal United Services Institute reviewed a book written by Generalleutnant A. von Boguslawski, *Der Kleine Krieg*, (1880). The partisan's mission and military objectives were: firstly, to gather intelligence of the enemy; secondly, to prevent them from conducting a surprise attack; thirdly, to keep the opponent occupied; fourthly, to harass the enemy as much as possible but without causing the force to be compromised; and, finally it was understood that this was an acceptable form of resistance against an occupying force. This was the accepted status of the partisan, especially in Russia and Germany, until 1942.

and disastrous consequences, which might change the very issue of the war.’<sup>16</sup> Lieber therefore combined his considerable legal ability with his moral outrage to criminalize the guerrilla as a robber and scoundrel. Therefore, Lieber offered no outlet for a people to resist an unwelcome occupation, rather, he relied upon the good graces of the professional occupier to do the right (moral) thing.

There were other inherent weaknesses in the Lieber Code, and especially so in its contradictions between the soldier and the civilian:

Private citizens are no longer murdered, enslaved, or carried off to distant parts, and the inoffensive individual is as little disturbed in his private relations as the commander of the hostile troops can afford to grant in the overruling demands of a vigorous war.<sup>17</sup>

With its inner chivalric morality this code was fixed to a time that either no longer existed, or had never really existed. It lacked an appreciation for the reality and general direction modern war was taking. Ironically Lieber was on the fringes of the central decision-making process that was taking war to a new and as yet unknown level of industrialisation. In fact, his moral overtones became even more rooted into his concepts as he sought to bring about the civilisation to warfare:

Men who take arms against one another in public war do not cease on this account to be moral beings, responsible to one another and to God...Military necessity does not admit of cruelty – that is, the infliction of suffering for the sake of suffering or for revenge, nor of maiming or wounding except in fight, nor torture to extort confessions. It does not admit of the use of poison in any way, nor of the wanton devastation of a district. It admits of deception, but disclaims acts of perfidy; and in general, military necessity does not include any act of hostility, which makes the return to peace unnecessarily difficult.<sup>18</sup>

Confined by his own classifications, Lieber totally misunderstood the trends set during the American Civil War into the economic and social aspects of modern warfare. The Civil War had given the first indications of the potential of total war. In an interesting study of the Union Army’s occupation policy, Mark Grimsley has explored how security measures changed alongside the circumstances of the war. Grimsley recalled these methods ‘hard war’, which had been commonly used during and

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<sup>16</sup> Lieber, *Guerrilla Parties*, p22.

<sup>17</sup> Hartigan, General Order No. 100, section I, points 23.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, section I, points 15, 16.

immediately after the war. In his view the Lieber Code, was a deliberate policy directed toward the destruction of the Confederate rebellion. In fact Grimsley went so far as to say, 'Lieber's Code... was ambiguous. On the one hand, it enjoined Union forces to behave with humanity. On the other, it declined to set specific limits on what those forces might do to achieve victory, and largely prohibited only unauthorized destruction.'<sup>19</sup>

When J.H. Morgan, translated and published the German War Book (*Kriegsbrauch im Landkriege*) in 1915, the outcome was a work of pure propaganda.<sup>20</sup> The book was introduced as primary evidence by several prosecution lawyers during the Nuremberg Tribunals, as damning proof for the deliberate German institutionalization of military regulation toward the procedural employment of ruthlessness in warfare. The status of this book has been overplayed but we should be aware of its contents to further understand the prevailing attitudes of occupation and conquest. The first part of the book was dedicated to establishing the bellicose character of the Germans. The second part of the book was the manual for German officers in the conduct and laws of war. Its direction, like the Lieber Code, further embroidered the contradictions between the soldier and civilian during wartime:

What is permissible includes every means of war without which the object of the war cannot be obtained; what is reprehensible on the other hand includes every act of violence and destruction, which is not demanded by the object of war.<sup>21</sup>

The manual allowed for the excuse of military necessity to overcome all actions by the army during wartime. The booklet regulated the behaviour of an invading army, including the handling of 'war rebellion' and 'war treason' which had also been major concerns of Lieber. The German war book made the following distinctions between the two:

By war rebellion is to be understood the taking up of arms by the inhabitants against the occupation; by war treason on the other hand the injury or

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<sup>19</sup> Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union military policy toward civilians, 1861-1865*, (Cambridge, 1995), p151.

<sup>20</sup> JH Morgan, *The German War Book: Being "The Usage of War on Land" issued by the Great General Staff of the German Army*, (London, 1915). This book was offered up by several prosecution councillors during the Nuremberg Tribunals as providing legal precedents of institutionalized military regulation for German ruthlessness in war.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p64.

imperilling of the enemy's authority through deceit or through communication of news to one's own army as to the disposition, movement, and intention, etc., of the army in occupation, whether the person concerned has come into possession of his information by lawful or unlawful means (i.e. by espionage).<sup>22</sup>

The war book also offered guidance on the administration of an occupation, including the annexation and the allegiance of the occupied population to the occupier. The instigation of martial law was consistent with that of Lieber's code:

The introduction of an extraordinary administration of justice - martial law and courts-martial - is therefore only to take place if the behaviour of the inhabitants makes it necessary.... Transgressions by officials are punished by the laws of their country, but an abuse of their position to the prejudice of the army of occupation will be punished by martial law.<sup>23</sup>

In 1950, Major Richard Baxter, of the US Army Judge Advocate Department, discussed the laws regarding the belligerent occupant and the duty of the inhabitant:

In the Second World War, occupation practices often so far exceeded the bounds of legally permissible conduct that it is difficult, if not impossible, to subject them to legal analysis. When legal principles were invoked by members of the Axis, their application was part of a concerted scheme of oppression, and the law was prostituted to the purposes of the occupied forces. The premature annexation of certain areas by the German Reich would thus become the occasion for the extension of all or a portion of the German Criminal Code to the area so incorporated.<sup>24</sup>

Baxter recognised the same duties of the inhabitant under occupation, devised by Lieber. He believed the Lieber Code was limited and ineffective as a legal constraint, with its attention on moral duty pertaining to citizenship. His inclination was that as a code of humanity it had failed. It was compromised, Baxter said, by the over elaboration for military order rather than the protection of the civilian.

Baxter was also critical of Lieber's concept of war treason. He noted that the code's origins dated back to German medieval law, founded as it was on the violation of the duties of fidelity, and was irrelevant and that judgments should be based upon international rather than provincial laws. In other words, civilians under occupation

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p121.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p140.

<sup>24</sup> Major Richard Baxter, 'The Duty of Obedience to the Belligerent Occupant', The Royal Institute of International Affairs, (1950, Yearbook), p251.



should not be tried under the laws of the occupier. Paradoxically, during the military trials that followed the main Nuremberg Tribunal the U.S. prosecutors imposed American municipal codes, to amplify the war crimes charges against German defendants.<sup>25</sup> Baxter also raised the question of insurgency operations behind enemy lines:

The activities of British secret agents who were sent into occupied France to assist the resistance movement would appear to fall within that definition of war treason, which embraces the hostile activities in occupied territory of military personnel disguised as civilians.<sup>26</sup>

Surprisingly, Baxter did not wholly denigrate German military law. In the case of Nurse Edith Cavell, he felt that under section 58 of the Military Penal Code, she was correctly found guilty of military treason and executed by firing squad. He also pointed out that the Nuremberg War Crimes tribunals had judged the killing of hostages following repeated warnings was legal. Years later and with Baxter seemingly long forgotten, Geoffrey Best published his thoughts on 'Humanity in Warfare'. Best proclaimed Francis Lieber the founder of the modern rules of warfare and a humanitarian.<sup>27</sup> The laws of war were codes of conduct under which professional armies were left to fight unhindered from civilian interference. However, when the professional soldiers decided to mobilise the civilian they began the process of dismantling the laws of war.

## II. German Army Tradition

In the years of the "trench war of position," few words assumed a meaning more laden with emotion than the word Etappe (rear).... The front troops drew a dividing line between themselves and those officers and soldiers who had "the good and safe life" of the Etappe.<sup>28</sup>

Between 1870 and 1939, the German military tradition constructed a peculiar form of security. The baggage trains that had followed in the rear of advancing German armies were remodelled prior to Franco-Prussian war to include a structure of occupation administration and security. Following the establishment and later institution of this

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<sup>25</sup> USMT, The Pohl Case, p1619, precedents were introduced into the court from New York municipal legislation. Not being a lawyer it is therefore difficult to rationalise why lawyers thought it appropriate to introduce laws not applicable to that country, judge a foreigner under those laws, in an alien country, virtually find them all guilty, and subsequently plead this was equitable and not just victors justice.

<sup>26</sup> Baxter, 1950, p252.

<sup>27</sup> Geoffrey Best, *Humanity in Warfare*, (London, 1980).

<sup>28</sup> Hans Ernest Fried, *The Guilt of the German Army*, (New York, 1942), p162.

military bureaucracy the German army began to introduce unique doctrines and measures of security. The peak of this development occurred between 1900 and 1918, and was directly attributable to the combined of experiences generated firstly through colonialism and later in the First World War.

### The Franco-Prussian War and Occupation of France (1870-1873)

In 1870, the Prussian Chancellor, Bismarck, wanted war with France to be quickly resolved. Von Moltke on the other hand, aimed for France's unconditional surrender, with its armies destroyed, and its military regalia (flags) captured by his victorious armies.<sup>29</sup> The different opinions of Bismarck and Moltke, the brain of Prussian decision-making, struck at the heart of the problem within the tradition of German occupation policy. Political as opposed to military necessity, short war as opposed to protracted war; these were issues that the German Army was never able to resolve. We now begin to become aware of the deep dichotomy within the received history of the German Army. A rapid conclusion to war negates the need for a strong sophisticated administration. Yet the Vernichtungsstrategie (strategy of annihilation) of Moltke called forth a different form of occupation, one which imposed an absolute stranglehold on an opponent. The missing strand from within this history is the role of the General Staff in the formulation and implementation of the crushing occupation policy. These measures were of course indistinguishable from the policy of continental based conquest and colonisation. The war itself has become symbolic of the political strength of Prussia and the rise of the Imperial German state. In so being, the real meaning behind the occupation of France has tended to be overlooked. The fact that Bismarck, so keen on rapid war, ensured that the German occupation of France remained in place until his demands of reparations were fulfilled. Thus the army only finally left France in 1873, three years after the Battle of Sedan. This decisive battle therefore had far ranging implications beyond its immediate strategic or tactical result. In other words decisive victory had led to the imposition of rigorous occupation.

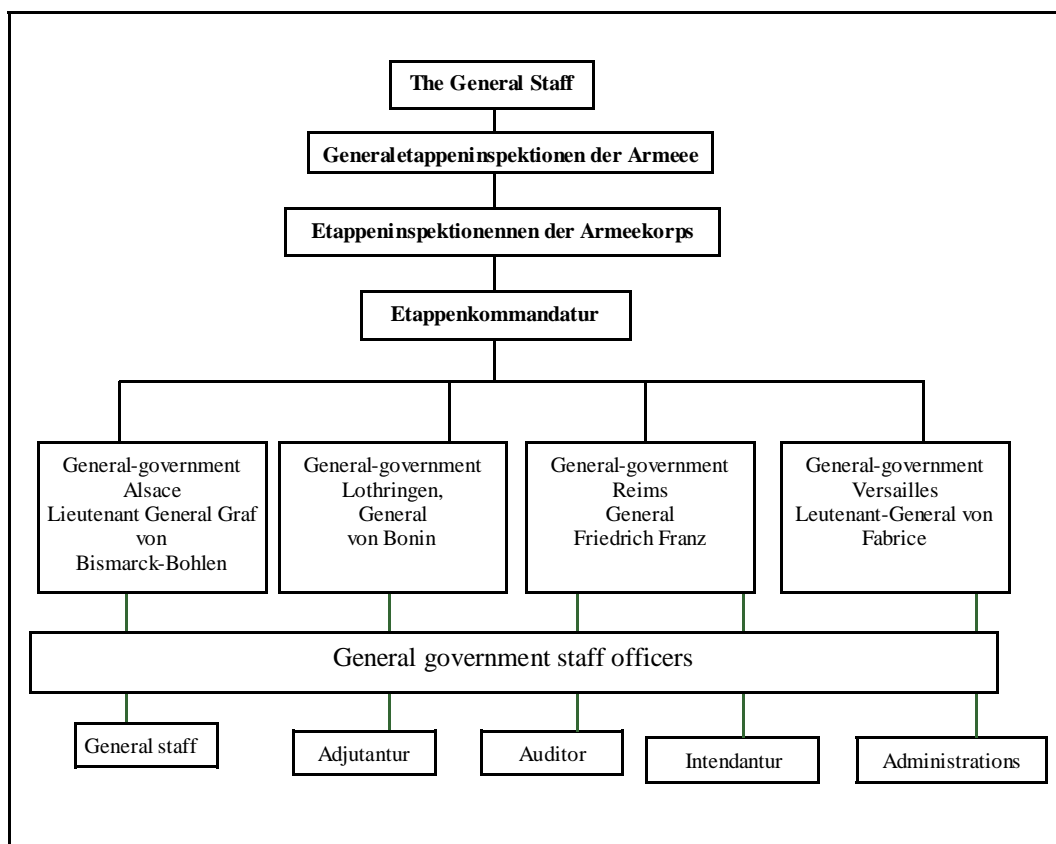
The Prussian military occupation structure was formed around the Etappe or army rear area (a model of this structure can be found in Diagram 1). This began as a typically military style structure placed under the direct command of Great General

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<sup>29</sup> Gordon A. Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army 1640-1945*, (Clarendon, 1955), p276.

Staff (Grosser Generalstab). From the top down the General Inspector Rear Area of the Army (Generaletappeninspektionen der Armee) was senior to the Rear Area Inspector of an Army Corps (Etappeninspektionen der Armeekorps) who in turn had seniority over the Rear Area Commander (Etappenkommandanturen). In 1870, the Etappe system alone was not the answer to the political and economic problems raised in the occupied areas. These problems went beyond its functional capabilities. The original military security system developed by the Prussian army had not been expected to maintain a long period of occupation. It therefore re-engineered its structures to accommodate civilian experts and specialists who were expected to handle these problems with their commensurate skills. We are not altogether sure how successful these changes were on a daily basis, what little original evidence has survived does not answer all our questions.<sup>30</sup>

**Diagram 1: The Prussian occupation structure (1870-1873)<sup>31</sup>**



<sup>30</sup> The files of the Prussian War Office and occupation were largely destroyed in the Berlin bombing of 1945.

<sup>31</sup> Constructed from: Thierfelder, op cit; passim; Howard, ibid, passim; Craig, 1955, passim, Martin Van Creveld, *Supplying War: Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton*, (Cambridge, 1977).

When in 1943, Dr. Rudolf Thierfelder wrote about this Prussian occupation system, he naturally described a stylised monolithic top-down structure.<sup>32</sup> A decision was made to insert a semi-permanent political function into the Etappe structure. The result was a military-political system that handled economic, social, political and legal functions. The original order for this structure came from the Prussian Kaiser Wilhelm I on the 26<sup>th</sup> August 1870, forming the Generalgouvernements (general-governments) intended only as a temporary measure to handle the political questions of occupation. Thierfelder identified four political military regional administrations, the general-governments of Alsace and Lorraine, Lothringen, Rheims, and, Versailles. This Prussian administration had two central aims, the return to work of French society; and, the prevention of chaos and collapse. The system of military justice was supervised by the Commander-in-chief down to the Etappenhauptorte (local rear area department). Military justice and martial law were administered by roving special military courts (Sondergerichte). Proceedings were conducted as a formal court under full military procedure. They dispensed punishment towards francs-tireurs and suspects. Michael Howard identified the important role the elderly German reservists (Landwehr) made, who were usually mobilised during times of war or national emergency, in the instigation of German security measures. The numbers of Landwehr were supposed to be in excess of 110,000 assigned to occupation duties. These duties included guarding the railway lines and strong points. They also took hostages and committed reprisals as a means to deter the francs-tireurs.<sup>33</sup>

Police authority in the field was established through a combination of constables, prefects, mayors and the Etappenkommandanten. In Lorraine, the Chief of the Landgendarmerie came from Berlin to establish a small rural police command (Landgendarmeriekommando). In Rheims, they employed local collaborators in what was called the SchutzMänner, to defend the land against roving bands of francs-tireurs and banditry. The military police (Feldgendarmerie) were also committed to assist the occupation process. In each army corps, there was a military police detachment of one Rittmeister (officer), two Wachtmeistern (NCO), and sixty Feldgendarmen (military

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<sup>32</sup> Dr. jur. habil. Rudolf Thierfelder, *Die Verwaltung der besetzten französischen Gebiete 1870/73*, (Darmstadt, 1943). A certain level of caution is taken in referring to books published during the Nazi period as in this example by Thierfelder. It was written on behalf of the German military administration in occupied France during 1943. It has therefore only been used to illustrate the German occupation model.

<sup>33</sup> Michael Howard, *Franco-Prussian War 1870-71*, (London, 1962), pp377-378.

policemen). Under the Prussian system the Feldgendarmerie were attached to the Army level commands and worked alongside the Landespolizei in the occupation zones. By 1871, the total German occupation force was estimated at equivalent to nine divisions of men (upwards of 150,000). The general-governments were not completely disbanded until September 1873, when Germany had received all its demands for reparations.

In the 1870 model of occupation security a balance was struck between political, economic and military aims. This occupation system led the German army to employ civilian commissioners (senior civil servants) as general-governors of the occupation of France. Attached to the general-government were a handful of staff officers whose job it was to ensure the management of occupation was in line with military policy. These formations and staff handled the rear area of the army; in all there were five departments.<sup>34</sup> The general staff office (Generalstabgeschäfte) handled all military transport including marching orders and troop movements, as well as everyday staff duties. The administration office (Administrationsgeschäfte) conducted negotiations with civilian inspectors and regional authorities. They also handled political communication and propaganda, and controlled general policing duties (rural and military police). The adjutant general (Adjutanturgeschäfte) dealt with guard units and rosters, hospitals and medical equipment, religious welfare, mail and telegraphy. The (financial office) (Auditoratsgeschäfte) accounted the incomes and expenditures within the zone. The commissariat office (Intendanturgeschäfte) was responsible for food supplies and the distribution of rations.

Bismarck's judgement of France during the peace negotiations following the Battle of Sedan set the tone of this and future German occupations. Bismarck offered three opinions. Firstly, France had menaced European stability for eight generations and had perpetually conducted war in Germany for over two hundred years. Secondly, France was no longer a coherent state whose institutions were valued; it was an unreliable state. Finally, Germany, as a peaceful nation had had war declared upon it by a state that believed only it could monopolise the honours of victory.<sup>35</sup> In Michael Howard's view, these opinions were in part generated by the decisive French victory over Prussia at Jena in 1806 and that the spectre of France had not been fully expunged by the subsequent allied victory of 1815. In effect, Prussia had been denied the right of

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<sup>34</sup> Thierfelder, 1943, pp. 9-10.

<sup>35</sup> Howard, 1962, pp220-223.

revenge which had been satisfied through the victory at Sedan. However, German war aims were not just limited to battlefield revenge. There were the remaining annexationist grievances, a hangover from the French Revolution, the territories of Alsace and Lorraine. Thus to underwrite German unification Bismarck imposed on France reparations of money 4,200 million marks and the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine.

#### German South-West Africa (1904-1906)

The competition for colonies and the climate of international rivalry led many European powers into introducing comprehensive schemes of colonial pacification. This in turn instilled a series of 'cause and effect' responses to security policy that reflected the heightened crises of arms races and the air of foreign policy brinkmanship. The work of David Killingray has increased our knowledge of the history of colonial policing and the security empires. A common feature of the colonial regimes, he argued, was their general dependence upon locally recruited forces for internal security. These local forces might have to be supported by the deployment of regular military units brought from the homeland:

All European colonial powers raised local indigenous troops in their African colonies. These small lightly armed forces were recruited from supposed martial races, often 'loyal aliens' and people from the periphery of the colony, and were commanded mainly by white officers. The role of the colonial troops was to defend the borders of the colony but principally to pacify the country and then maintain internal security. Black men were employed by white men to put down black men! They might also be employed in the defence of a neighbouring colony. The policy was cheap and practical.<sup>36</sup>

Killingray identified the power of guerrilla warfare as one method by which indigenous peoples could stem the tide of colonisation, 'Guerrilla warfare enabled inferior armed forces and even small polities to hold out against greatly superior imperial armies and prevent the consolidation and 'pacification' of colonial territory.'<sup>37</sup> Killingray also made the point that prior to the First World War the experiences of

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<sup>36</sup> David Killingray, 'If I fight for them maybe then I can go back to my village: African Soldiers in the Mediterranean and European Campaigns, 1939-45, Paul Addison and Angus Calder (ed), *Time to Kill: The Soldiers experience of war in the west, 1939-1945*, (London, 1997), p94.

<sup>37</sup> David Killingray and David Omissi, *Guardians of Empire: The Armed Forces of the Colonial Powers, c.1700-1964*, (Manchester, 1999), p8.

colonialism, however brutal, did not prepare the powers for world war. He has written that the great powers had learned little from their experience in colonial warfare.<sup>38</sup> The Boer War of 1899 to 1902, caused the British public embarrassment by defeat at the hands of what appeared to be a rag-tag Boer Army. The early reversals of the British led to a predictable series of harsh counter-measures. After several significant defeats, the Boers turned to guerrilla warfare. The conflict caused the British Empire to deploy nearly half a million men and the costs spiralled.<sup>39</sup>

Lord Kitchener was given the job of finally defeating the Boers guerrillas and reduce the cost of the war. He established a large army of occupation in South Africa, and introduced a counter-insurgency policy for the British Army to combat the guerrilla threat.<sup>40</sup> Kitchener introduced the blocking system to monitor the movement of rebels, which was a highly effective system and soon to be copied by the Germans. The block system utilised the railway and communication lines. At key points along the lines a security post (usually a block house or bunker) was erected to monitor the movement of Boers and establish a telegraphic link directly with Kitchener's headquarters. Troops and machine guns reinforced these posts. The railways were used to rapidly deploy troops to trouble spots. The system enabled Kitchener to remain in his headquarters fully informed as to Boer movements. His headquarters maintained maps tracking the Boers and could rapidly despatch troops to prevent infiltrations from becoming serious problems. Kitchener also employed large numbers of cavalry to counteract the Boers' field mobility. Thus Kitchener had brought together control systems, mobility and new technology.

Between 1900 and 1914, Germany experienced colonial crisis. The colonial security system relied on a locally raised militia, the Schutztruppen for its imperial policing. They were formed from a cadre of German officers and NCOs, some of who came from the army. To facilitate these forces the German Army raised an expeditionary force to be sent to any trouble spot. The German military expedition to China, for the pacification of the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, was the first serious

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<sup>38</sup> Killingray and Omissi, *ibid*.

<sup>39</sup> Edward Spiers, 'The Late Victorian Army 1869-1914', in David Chandler (ed), *The Oxford History of the British Army*, (Oxford, 1996), p201.

<sup>40</sup> Denis Judd, *Empire, The British Imperial Experience from 1765 to the Present*, (London, 1996), pp 100-101. Kitchener was an engineer by training and had been the commander of the British forces that had destroyed the Sudanese uprising. Following the Battle of Omdurman, in 1898, Kitchener's forces inflicted 11,000 casualties on the Sudanese while the British suffered 48 losses.

deployment of the German army since 1871. Kaiser Wilhelm II sent a message to the troops of the German Expeditionary Force, 'When in front of the beaten enemy, pardon is not granted, take no prisoners.'<sup>41</sup> With hindsight this appears to have been the most appropriate phraseology to mark the opening of the Twentieth Century.

The Herero uprising in Namibia (German South-west Africa) saw the imposition of a pacification programme that was to have a lasting effect upon German security policy. Helmut Bley noticed that the Kaiser and the German government initially responded to the Herero uprising as a war, rather than the less grandiose case of simple colonial policing. In the beginning, the Herero were successful, especially against the local German forces. Following early setbacks Theodor von Leutwin (governor of German Southwest Africa, 1898-1904) organised two new formations from the forces sent to him by Field Marshal von Schlieffen the Chief of the General Staff in Berlin, in March 1904. He deployed the Schutztruppen and the German marine expedition forces in ineffective piecemeal actions. The German government, and in particular the Kaiser, decided to send an expeditionary force under the command of General of Infantry Lothar von Trotha a man of considerable reputation in colonial pacification operations (note *Dramatis Personae*). Trotha in some ways had a similar record to Kitchener. They were both men of their time; and, von Trotha in particular stamped his concept for security firmly on German occupation policy. The consequences of von Trotha's security policy were its impact on military racialism, captive labour, land acquisition, pacification, and genocide. According to Woodruff Smith von Trotha excelled in his work, and had powerful friends to ensure his continual employment.<sup>42</sup>

Von Trotha arrived in Namibia in June 1904, whereupon he proceeded to concentrate his forces, and at the same time introduced a comprehensive Etappe structure (Table 1).<sup>43</sup> He had in fact imposed a network of security across Namibia, as had Kitchener in South Africa. However, unlike Kitchener he had deployed a major force to intercept the bulk of the Herero and to soundly defeat them in battle. In August

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<sup>41</sup> Gerd Fesser, "Pardon wird nicht gegeben!", *Die Zeit* number 31, 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2000, published on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the issue of the infamous no pardon order, p17.

<sup>42</sup> Woodruff D. Smith, *The German Colonial Empire*, (North Carolina, 1978) p64: 'Encouraged by the Kaiser to behave ruthlessly in China, Trotha did exactly that, leaving behind fierce hatred for Germany and setting an example for German colonial warfare that was much remarked in other countries.'

<sup>43</sup> It has been suggested by Bley and several other historians that von Schlieffen was behind the strategy in Namibia and that von Trotha was following orders.



1904, von Trotha struck the Herero in an encircling offensive at the Battle of the Waterberg. According to Trotha's diaries:

My initial plan for the operation, which I always adhered to, was to encircle the masses of Hereros at Waterberg, and to annihilate these masses with a simultaneous blow, then to establish various stations to hunt down and disarm the splinter groups who escaped, later to lay hands on the captains by putting prize money on their heads and finally to sentence them to death.... My intimate knowledge of many central African tribes (Bantu and others) has everywhere convinced me of the necessity that the Negro does not respect treaties but only brute force....<sup>44</sup>

Most versions of the battle suggest he deliberately left one wing of his army weakened to allow the Herero to break out but only into the wastes of the Kalahari Desert. Mass killing followed, partly because von Trotha ordered his men to kill on sight and partly due to the ravages of the desert. Later he sent the Herero a letter of his intentions:

I the great General of the German troops send this letter to the Herero people.

The Herero are no longer German subjects. They have murdered and stolen, they have cut off the ears, noses and other body parts of wounded soldiers, now out of cowardice they no longer wish to fight...The Herero people must leave the land. If the populace does not do this I will force them out with cannon. Within the German borders every Herero, with or without a gun, with or without cattle, will be shot. I will no longer accept women and children, I will drive them back to their people or I will let them be shot at. These are my words to the Herero people.

The Great General of the mighty German Kaiser.<sup>45</sup>

When the fighting ended and the occupation began 14,000 German soldiers were deployed. German casualties had amounted 676 were killed and 689 wounded, while Herero losses are said to fall somewhere between 35,000 and 100,000 killed.<sup>46</sup> The war had lasted between, 1904-07, although German offensive operations ended in 1906. Herero POWs were not released until 1908. German police action continued well into

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<sup>44</sup> Gerhardus Pool, *Samuel Maherero*, (Windhoek, 1991) p269 and pp272-4.

<sup>45</sup> Jan-Bart Gewald, *Herero Heroes: A Socio- Political History of the Herero of Namibia 1890-1923*, (Oxford, 1999), pp172-173. Also in Gunter Spraul, 'Der "Völkermord" an den Herero', in *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 39 (1988), pp713-739.

<sup>46</sup> Gesine Krüger, *Kriegsbewältigung und Geschichtsbewußtsein: Realität, Deutung und Verarbeitung des deutschen Kolonialkriegs in Namibia 1904 bis 1907*, (Berlin, 1999), pp62-63.

1915, ending only with the onset of the First World War. Mass killing or ethnic cleansing followed the last battle, and again it is alleged that by 1906 of a Herero population of 80,000, there were only 20,000 left.<sup>47</sup> In 1919 the British came to a figure of 90,000 killed which was pitted against Germany during the Treaty of Versailles negotiations, but these figures have subsequently been challenged.<sup>48</sup>

The organisation of the Etappen System in Namibia, formulated by von Trotha, was very similar to that of 1870; but with one noticeable exception, the absence of the political functions of the general-government. This was a system of pure military occupation; there was little need for political specialists. The Etappenkommandantur Swakopmund under Captain Witt remained the key sector with the central supply depots. In each case we can see the important link between railway security and the creation of strategic towns or security centres. The numbers of troops in these stations were small. There were five officers, eighty-one men of which twenty were intended to stay behind in the event of orders to march. The railway troops (Eisenbahnruppen) and the station facilities commander (Bahnhofskommandatur) controlled the provisions for all the armed forces. The out stations listed as part of the local network were Nonidas, Richtofen, Rössing, Khan; Welwitsch; Pforte; Jakalswater (major rail centre).

**Table 1: The Etappe in German South-West Africa (1906)<sup>49</sup>**

SECTOR 1	Etappenkommandantur	Swakopmund	Railway Station Commander
Nonidas, Richtofen, Rössing, Khan, Welwitsch, Pforte, Jakalswater (major rail centre)	Captain Witt 5 Officers, 81 men	Railway Troops 1 Officer, 60 Men, 7 Horses	Railway Maintenance, Horse, Cattle, Depot, Uniforms, Artillery Depot, Field Hospital, Baker, Butcher, Etappen Magazine
SECTOR 2	Etappenkommandantur	Karibib	
Johann Albrechtshöhe: 2 NCOs, 7 men	Senior Lieutenant von Kuhn 1 Officer: 43 Men, 18 Horses	Railway Troop 1 Officer, 33 Men, 87 railwaymen	Ababis: 1 officer, 1 medical officer, 12 men
Wilhelmstal: 2 NCOs. 15 men, 1 Machinenkanone, 3 horses	Okafife: 1 officer, 1 NCO, 15 Men, 1 Machinenkanone, 3 horses	Otjimbingwe: 1 officer, 4 men, 17 Bastarde, 8 Bergdamara	Habis (cattle post): 1 NCO, 9 men, 3 policemen, 3 guards, 300 Cattle
SECTOR 3	Etappenkommandantur	Outjo	

<sup>47</sup> Hauptmann Schwabe, *Der Krieg in Deutsch-Südwestafrika 1904-1906*, (Berlin, 1907), Schwabe mentions that by July 1906 there were 17,000 Herero prisoners in German camps, in chapter entitled the end of the Herero people, p306.

<sup>48</sup> Patricia Hayes, Jeremy Silvester, Marion Wallace, Wolfram Hartmann, (Ed), *Namibia under South African Rule: Mobility and Containment, 1915-46*, figures taken in turn from the following report, United Kingdom, *Report on the Natives of South-West Africa and Their Treatment by Germany*, (London, 1918). Bastarde and Bergdamara troops were from other tribes of Namibia.

<sup>49</sup> The model relies upon the incomplete details provided by Hauptmann Schwabe's book on the war, written in 1907. Although considerable searches were made to locate further details this is all that remains.

	Captain von Fielder 3 Officers, 52 men (1 officer and 11 stationary) 19 reservists, 56 horses, magazines and depots as with sector 1 above.		
SECTOR 4	Etappenkommandanturen Okahandla		

The elements of the occupation forces that stand particular attention are those concerning communications and security. Communications and intelligence of course go hand in hand. However, we can actually see behind von Trotha's realisation for the Etappen in terms of security. He projected two central security missions, the first was to secure supplies and communications, localised to within each etappe sector. The second, was the security in the rear of the army, providing support to maintain the offensive and the hunting down of the Herero. In other words there were two management levels of security, the strategic and the tactical. It was also dependent upon the railways and cavalry for mobility. This illustrates the common recognition of the European commanders for good mobility in countering guerrilla actions. There was also an increasing dependency upon civilians, both professionals or tradesmen, to supplement the local expertise of collaborators and impressed labour.

The question of orders also raises some interesting questions about the German high command and the commander in the field. The commanding officer in the field could freely interpret policy and implement the measures felt to be appropriate to the circumstances. As Carl Peters was to write of the colonial operations in German East Africa in 1898, he had to ignore the regressive orders of the 'Great Chancellor' (Bismarck) to ensure the survival of the colony.<sup>50</sup> Lothar von Trotha as the commander in the field, had put into practice a form of military-racialism in Namibia, with two obvious consequences: genocide and enslavement. In 1905, von Trotha was recalled while the new Governor Lindquist realised that his methods were having a long-term detrimental effect on the colony through the destruction of cheap but skilled labour. Thus there were two sides of the Trotha doctrine of security. On the one hand an aggressive mobile anti-guerrilla offensive operating through a comprehensive positional nationwide security network. This structure was underpinned by a relatively advanced telecommunications system and the speed of the railways. On the other hand his doctrine relied upon rigid social controls of the indigenous population and the absolute

<sup>50</sup> BA BL, BDC, SS personnel file, Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski.

exploitation of the local economy. The question of results seems to have been founded upon the concept of body counts. The extraordinary imbalance in the loss ratio of 88:1, of Herero to Germans, was to be paralleled in the Second World War in the fighting between the Germans and partisans. The reliability and the basis of these figures were at, no moment in time, questioned. Likewise, the small number of German casualties, in the case of the Battle of the Waterberg, 5 officers and 21 men were killed and 7 officers and 53 men wounded, appeared to be accepted at face value. The authoritarian language that von Trotha employed was almost certainly unique to the conditions of colonialism but German commanders in later wars made announcements toward occupied peoples in a similar vein.

### The First World War (1914-1918)

The First World War represented a watershed in the history of German security as well as bringing about fundamental changes in the doctrines, and aims of war. Fritz Fischer identified some of these changes which he attributed to German aggressiveness as a major cause of the war.<sup>51</sup> These aggressive ideals behind German war-making were not confined to the realm of soldiers and politicians. Academics, businessmen and other influential aspects of German society embraced them; all of whom believed that the ordered European state system had collapsed and that the emphasis was the struggle of national survival. The new forces of the age were 'neo-mercantilism' and 'imperialism.'<sup>52</sup> He also recognised that the old wounds of 1870 remained unhealed deteriorating further the relationship between Germany and France. The economy, society, and industry had changed Germany radically from what it had been in 1870. Fischer described how the belief that Germany was a youthful and energetic nation, requiring Lebensraum (living-space) to survive, confined to limited space in Central Europe, was largely believed by the public. There was a general feeling that that Germany's time had come.<sup>53</sup>

Fischer pointed out that the real changes in German war aims came about once the war was in progress. They ranged across a wide variety of demands. For example, the Governor-General of Belgium, General von Bissing, wanted to apply 'ruthlessness' and

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<sup>51</sup> Fritz Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War*, (London, 1967), originally published in German as *Griff nach der Weltmacht*, (Düsseldorf, 1961).

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, pp8-9.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, pp11-12.

little leniency in the exploitation of Belgium for Germany's benefit. The population, von Bissing suggested, should be trained to become an outpost for Germany, turning Belgium into a reservation of forced labour.<sup>54</sup> On the eastern front there were even greater expansionist demands directed in particular towards Poland and the Ukraine. The German demands set against the Ukraine were boundless. As Fisher recognised the policy in the east came down to colonialism, 'The farms of the German colonists in the Ukraine must be protected' was a driving theme of the army high command.<sup>55</sup> There was a further elaboration of the concept of Ostraum (space in the east) as the frontlines were pushed deeper into Russian territory. The Ukraine was to have become a permanent colony of the Kaiserreich, and a land bridge to Turkey.<sup>56</sup>

The Germans adapted their occupation systems to the different conditions raised during the First World War. In the west an elaborate system was constructed behind the frontline. The Etappen was constructed into an intricate structure of rear area security. Its operational ethos was a highly advanced command, communication and control system. On the eastern front the situation was very different, partly because the war in the east had been relatively mobile and wide ranging across relatively sparsely populated territories. The eastern theatre during 1917-18, saw the Germans experience victory, confirmed through the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, began to construct occupation structures as it had during the Franco-Prussian war. Military administration and general-government alike employed civilians, soldiers, specialist technicians and professionals in the occupied territories. During the war the army introduced a comprehensive set of security networks that worked toward temporary military occupation, annexation and conquest. The quest for absolute security included the securing of Germany's food supplies from the occupied territories.<sup>57</sup> Whether the effects of the allied naval blockade increased the pressure on the German decision of extensive economic exploitation within the occupied territories is not altogether clear. The systems were designed to create a military society within alien territory, providing all the soldiers needs, a minimum of interaction with the indigenous population and maintained on grounds of

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p261.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, pp504-505.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, pp534-562.

<sup>57</sup> Laurence V. Moyer, *Victory must be ours: Germany in the Great War 1914-18*, (USA, 1995), pp 124-125

strict discipline. The Etappe system, that had been so important in 1871 and in Namibia, was transformed by through the experience of the First World War.

### The Western Front (1914-18)

The German army entered the war with a pre-planned security agenda. The Schlieffen Plan called for the immediate pacification of the rear areas. There was to be no return of the *francs-tireurs*. The soldiers were encouraged to behave ruthlessly against the civilians of Belgium, and France.<sup>58</sup> Military administration and general-government alike employed civilians, soldiers, specialist technicians and professionals in the occupied territories. Gradually the army introduced a more comprehensive set of security networks. The drive toward absolute security was matched against a similar drive to economic exploitation on the occupation zones. These ideas called upon the employment of large quantities of civilians through collaboration, as volunteers or enforced through conscription.

This 'war by timetable' required the employment of a large railway system behind the front lines.<sup>59</sup> These included installations for the collection of supplies, turning around trains, the maintenance of rolling stock and, the construction of a signals and communication network. The armies marched in the expectancy of capturing rail networks and receiving the collaboration of local railway experts in keeping the system working. On the western front the French and especially the Belgians gradually became hostages to their very existence. The occupation of Belgium was a tragic story that led to grave suffering for its populace.<sup>60</sup> Major-General Gemp (a senior intelligence officer) reported an outbreak of guerrilla resistance (*Freischärlerkampf*) in Antwerp on the 29<sup>th</sup> September 1914.<sup>61</sup> The German equation of pacification through the application of extreme measures was aimed at galvanising collaboration, which in turn was based upon fear.<sup>62</sup> German security thinking was seemingly oblivious to the cycles of coercion and violence that it was implementing.

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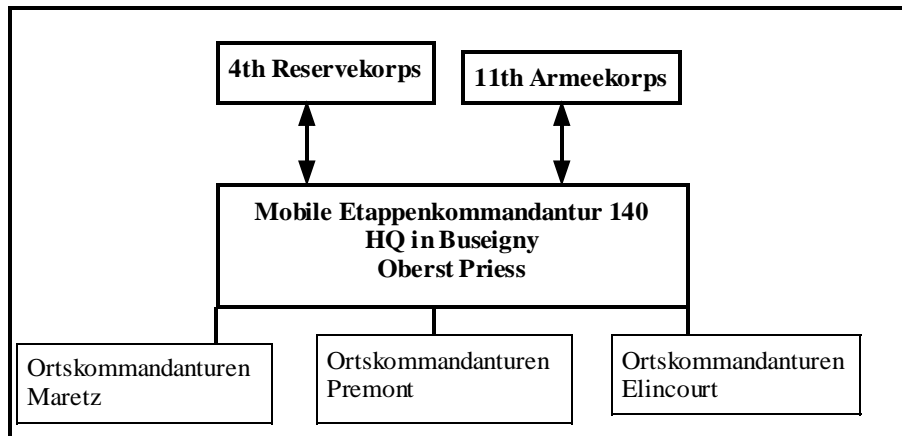
<sup>58</sup> Helen McPhail, *The Long Silence: Civilian Life under the German Occupation of Northern France, 1914-1918*, (London, 1999).

<sup>59</sup> Creveld, 1977, pp 94-96.

<sup>60</sup> BA MA, PH30 I/ Deutsche Ortskommandantur und Passabteilung in Kortryk and Wytschaede in Flanders, Belgium; /245 refer to the Belgium occupation and German rules. The rear areas were called *Etappegebiet*; /246 The Belgium military budgets

<sup>61</sup> BA MA, RW 5/v Kriegsministerium papers from the office of Major-General Gemp Geheimer Nachrichtendienst und Spionageabwehr des Heeres.

<sup>62</sup> Franz Petri und Peter Schöller, 'Zur Bereinigung des Franktireurproblems vom August 1914',

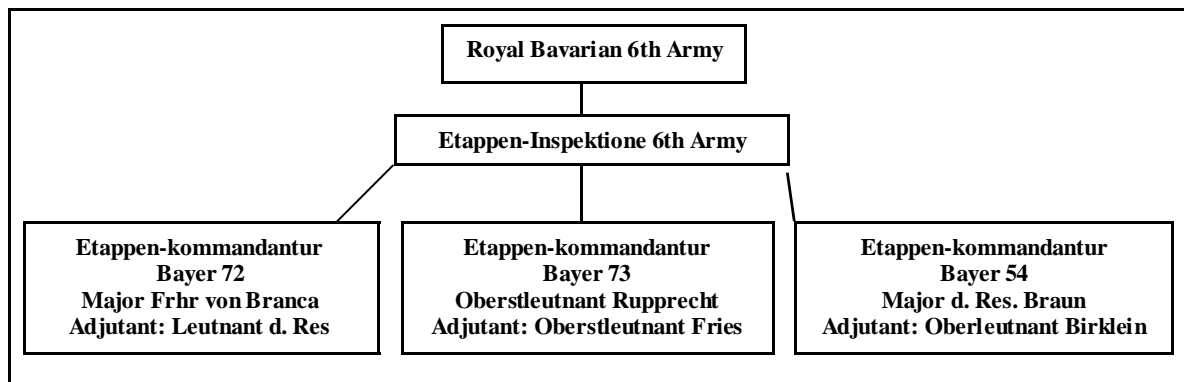
**Diagram 2: The Western Front Etappe 1917 (example 1)**<sup>63</sup>

Here, it is notable that the Etappe stretched from the near front lines deep into the occupied territories, even though France had not been completely defeated. Authority was divided between the forward armies and the military governors depending upon their borders of control. Ostensibly this was the same system however the fact that the allies were not permanently defeated by the German army meant that the system had to be put in place while exposed to intrusions from the enemy. In one sense this illustrates the system's inbuilt flexibility (although suggesting some rigidity on the part of the Germans to introduce it before victory) and how it could be adapted to circumstances. The individual formations of Etappen do not appear to have been responsible for their security beyond handling local troubles. This was similar to the Namibian model where real security forces were placed at the disposal of the Etappen in the event of trouble. This security was left to the available forces including cavalry and Secret Field Police (Geheime Feldpolizei - GFP). A major or lieutenant colonel commanded the Etappenkommandantur.<sup>64</sup> They in turn had a staff of approximately ten who were responsible for recording breaches in occupation and military law.

Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte, (1961), pp 234-248. This is a fascinating article on the German methods in 1914 and how the plans to deal with the francs-tireurs well in advance of the war.

<sup>63</sup> IWM, German Army box 13, Ortskommandanturen Marez, Elincourt and Premont, file 34903

<sup>64</sup> IWM, German Army Files, box 13, file number 34903.

**Diagram 3: The Western Front Etappe 1917 (example 2)**<sup>65</sup>

The areas occupied in France came under direct military rule. This was reflected in mass evacuations of civilians, clearance of strategic towns and villages and the exploitation of the land. The Germans had shown their interest in the forests, railways, and canals in 1870, and practised similar policies between 1914 and 1918. The importance of forests cannot be understated during wartime for they supplied railway sleepers, trench supports, blockhouse materials, firewood, materials for smelting metals, and a host of other needs. The techniques employed by the Germans on the western front during the First World War were principally directed toward preventing security breaches and espionage. There was a strong interest in maintaining social control through the completion of registers of the inhabitants of villages, labour listings and work rosters. From a small collection of records in the Imperial War Museum it is possible to piece together a picture of German measures. For example there was a great concern for preventing carrier pigeons (Brieftauben) from crossing the lines, the troops were ordered to prevent this at all costs.

On the 25 February 1918, the security office of the 50<sup>th</sup> (Reserve) Division reminded all officers and men of the need to check on civilian infiltrations into military zones. Troop vigilance was only part of a broader scheme to ensure complete military security. On the 4 February 1918, the same division posted rules for the implementation of cavalry patrols. The patrols were designated as holding the same powers as the gendarmerie, directly under the command of the divisional security officer. The patrol members were to wear a distinctive collar emblem and to carry divisional instructions as

<sup>65</sup> This suggested a total of 76 Ortskommandanturen - numbered between 219 to 316 for the Bavarian Army. Each with a Kriegsgericht, Militärgerichtsschreiber, Rechnungsführer, Schreiber and Trainsoldaten.



proof of their identity. Before the patrol a security officer would brief the troop on specific field activities and provide details for the routes to be taken. The patrols were to be conducted in the early hours of the evening or at dawn, and especially on moonlit nights. The aim was to arrest spies landed by enemy fliers, destroy reconnaissance balloons, collect enemy propaganda leaflets, and to kill carrier pigeons. All civilians located beyond their village limits had to be in possession of valid documentation including travel permits. They were to be searched in case they were smuggling food or letters.<sup>66</sup>

The same orders also stipulated caution when meeting with single German soldiers or officers. It was suggested that a correctly completed army pay-identity book (Soldbuch) would be sufficient to allow them to continue on their way. If the suspects were unable to identify themselves correctly then they were to be escorted to the nearest district commander (Ortskommandantur). The patrol was also expected to link up with the Ortskommandantur regarding any special routes or orders. This might include ensuring all civilians were in their homes after the curfew had been sounded. To facilitate this process the names of the inhabitants of a house were to be fixed near to the door. The order advised the patrol to be aware of a prior order concerning the contact between soldiers and civilians.<sup>67</sup> Finally, upon its completion, the patrol leader was expected to report to the intelligence officer. In yet another order by the same divisional intelligence officer concern was directed toward counter-espionage.<sup>68</sup> Captain Ende began by referring to the continual cases of espionage and that this order was a reminder of general security policy. He began by stating that it was important to use all methods and means to prevent espionage. Ende called upon the security troops, the gendarmerie patrols, the Ortskommandantur and all troops in the area to heed the order. He further stated:

The inhabitants must not send carrier pigeons to our enemies with military information (movements, etc). One troop of the division found a carrier pigeon (killed by a bird of prey) with a message still attached. It had been carrying a message that has been passed to the Geheime Feldpolizei. Two inhabitants of Rieux had received a death sentence for this. In addition to

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<sup>66</sup> IWM, German Army box 3, order Ic. Nr 170, posted by Hauptmann Freiherr von Ende of the general staff, 4<sup>th</sup> February 1918, file 43799.

<sup>67</sup> This order referred to a prior order, Ic.160 not located in the files, but which the intelligence officer Hauptmann Ende complained had not been adhered to.

<sup>68</sup> IWM, German Army box 3, order Ic, Nr. 193, Sicherungsdienst, 25<sup>th</sup> February 1918, file 43799.

this there is not enough harsh control of the inhabitants and the contacts between villages.

The disobedience of these orders will not be allowed. From divisional orders even French policemen were not allowed within the rear area wires. Traffic papers were issued too easily. German authority is not impressed enough by the Ortskommandanten. So the Ortskommandanten have to energetically use all possible means under the laws of punishment.

The duty of the Ortskommandanten is to control the inhabitants and traffic under the Armeeoberkommando orders of 1917. But it is also the duty of all the soldiers and officers to investigate civilians outside the village and check their papers. At the slightest suspicion they must be brought to the Ortskommandanturen for further investigation.

The German reliance upon local civilian labour was found in an order from 1917. The order concerned the raising of forced labour in the mines. All persons between 15-60, were to be listed by work officials (Arbeitsämter). They were to be listed by their work-specialism for later use. The work officials were to be kept informed about availability of manpower and the shifts:

To comply with these instructions, the whole population between 15-60 years, with the exception of those already working for the army, have to be collected together. The Etappen-Kommandanturen have to contact officials of the inhabitants to place them in lists without disturbance in the army's interests. Never reduce the potential of the worker, especially those in the mines. The Etappen-Kommandanturen is to place a 1.5km security zone around the local community or city and list the following:

1. Those shops that work for the army and the owners of each business;
2. A list of the shops that can remain open either because the owners are too old or useless physically, this will be confirmed following an examination by a medical officer;
3. a list of those shops that are to be closed.

All workers aged 15-60 fall under the command of the controllers of the mines. At this time there is no difference between volunteers and the unwilling in the work lists.<sup>69</sup>

The Germans also became fixated about making absolute the security of the Belgium-Holland border, notoriously difficult to police. It was known for being an

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<sup>69</sup> IWM, German Army box 13, Etappen-Inspektionen 1, 5<sup>th</sup> April 1917, Zusatzbestimmung der Et.-Inspektion zu AOK 1 Iib 37648 vom 28<sup>th</sup> March 1917, Betr: Organisation der Arbeitskraefte der Zivileinwohner, file 34900.

escape route for young Belgian men, spies and saboteurs who crossed the border with impunity. The Gemp files reflect the security concerns that were troubling the German high command.<sup>70</sup> The Germans decided to construct a massive electric fence in an attempt to close this border permanently.<sup>71</sup> Electricity was supplied from the Aachen suburban tramway which used AC supply and which had the generating facilities. The fence was eventually over 180 kilometres long. Some of the fence still exists and knowledge of its existence had led to greater interest in the border history of the region (Germany, Belgium and Holland). Many were electrocuted trying to cross the fence, and German soldiers shot others. The fence had long been forgotten before a local historian, Herbert Ruland, rediscovered its importance and it became the subject of a newspaper article.<sup>72</sup>

#### The Eastern Front (1915-1918)

Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius has recently published work on the German occupation zone in the east, focusing on one area known as the Ober Ost, (Oberbefehlshaber Ost). The occupation sector stretched from Riga by the Baltic Sea all the way to Bialystok in Poland. In his view it became an experiment in utopian military statehood. It was, according to Liulevicius, 'displaying a modern kind of rule, bureaucratic, technocratic, rationalised and ideological.'<sup>73</sup> The occupation under Hindenburg and Ludendorff was indeed a unique experiment in the east but it was not new to German military practitioners. Liulevicius is correct in suggesting that the Ober Ost was an indication of future events but it did not confirm a 'Sonderweg' (special-road) within German security thinking. Just as Hindenburg declared the Ober Ost independent (a Germanic military colony), the German high command established a more traditional form of occupation in Warsaw.

The Germans entered Warsaw on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1915, whereupon Field Marshal Falkenhayn established a General-Government.<sup>74</sup> Some records of the General-Government Warsaw have survived and they highlight the complexity of its

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<sup>70</sup> BA MA RW 5/v, *ibid*, Gemp.

<sup>71</sup> A. Vanneste, *Kroniek van Een Dorp in oorlog Neerpelt 1914-1918*, (Universitas, 1998).

<sup>72</sup> Martin Herzog and Marko Rösseler, 'Der große Zaun', *Die Zeit*, Nr. 17, 16<sup>th</sup> April 1998. The author's of the article described it as a bizarre chapter from the German military history of the First World War.

<sup>73</sup> Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front*, (Cambridge, 2000), p7.

<sup>74</sup> Roth P., *Die politische Entwicklung in Kongress-Polen während der deutschen Okkupation*, (Leipzig, 1919).

administration.<sup>75</sup> The sheer list of all those involved in the occupation included civilian specialists, university professors, architects, accountants, doctors, hunters, foresters, civil servants and a complete publication industry (publishers, printers, reporters, authors).<sup>76</sup> The occupation was put together through a network of security posts stretching across the whole area of Warsaw. The depth of planning, rebuilding of the communications infrastructure and the processes of education suggest an indication toward eventual colonisation. The education facilities were intended for the indigenous population. It is as yet unclear what the subject was in these schools.

Writing in 1927, Major-General Gemp noted that the fighting in the east had developed into a ruthless struggle. The Germans accused the Russians of fighting an underhand partisan campaign in either civilian clothes or Austrian uniforms.<sup>77</sup> German military intelligence relied heavily upon deserters, prisoners of war, and local civilians to provide security information. Gemp alleged that he relied upon the Jewish community to supply large numbers of spies and agents. Gemp made especially poignant comments when he suggested that the Jews were the best source of intelligence, and that a future German invasion should endorse a policy of friendship towards civil populations and welcome Russian prisoners of war. The Gemp files provide us with some interesting commentary on how the war was fought on the eastern front. The most interesting was the erratic use of the term *Bandenbekämpfung*.<sup>78</sup> The fighting against Russian soldiers, according to Gemp led to *Bandenbekämpfung* because of their deliberate policy of leaving troops behind to raise chaos within the German rear areas. Gemp envisaged problems from the mass of Russian stragglers and wanted them to be handled quickly and ruthlessly. He felt it was necessary to have the captured Russians placed in work battalions and detailed to projects for the war economy. The vast numbers of Russian prisoners he complained were left in wide-open areas and this had enabled them to escape and join the partisans.

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<sup>75</sup> BA MA, PH30II/61/62/63, Kaiserliches Generalgouvernement Warschau.

<sup>76</sup> BA MA, Kaiserliches General-Government Warschau, PH30 II/ 61, list of all those involved in the occupation and who were civilians. PH30 II/62, A completion record showing the general-government had operated from 1915 up to November 1918.

<sup>77</sup> BA MA, RW 5/v, *ibid*, Gemp. Some of these files were referred to on the 15th July 1944, which would suggest there was some form of clearing out process.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, p363.

The fighting in the rear-areas was sporadic but it undermined German authority in the occupation.<sup>79</sup> At one point in September 1916, leading members of the German security network began to discuss whether they should continue with the existing methods or bring about a new security system.<sup>80</sup> Essentially this meant either building a complete security structure with control posts or retaining the loose network of controls through the dispersed offices in the field. Security officers came from Kowno, Mitau, Schaulen, and Tilsit, along with representatives from tenth and eighth armies to discuss the problems. They decided to introduce a security force; the Secret Rear-Area Police (Geheime Etappenpolizei) to carry out pass controls. There was an intention to bring in military bureaucrats to service this system and issue passes. The commander of eastern security was concerned at the threat to the railways and communications from banditry (there was no explanation as to the nature of these bandits). Field police director Senior Lieutenant Toussaint complained at having to supply large numbers of passes at great cost, as well as having to handle the perpetual Bandenbekämpfung problem caused by escaping Russian prisoners of war.<sup>81</sup> In a secret police report for the months August-October 1916, (operations to counteract the Russian intelligence service) the results listed; for August, 117 arrested and 38 found guilty; September, 118 arrested and 39 found guilty; October, 98 arrested and 21 found guilty. Those found guilty were executed while the rest were released.<sup>82</sup> If Liulevicius is correct in his findings, the lands in the east, during the two world wars, were turned into places of extremes and horror.<sup>83</sup> In the area of Białowieża, an area of extensive forests, the Polish community suffered at the hands of the Germans in both World Wars.

#### *Drang nach Osten – The Polish Forest of Białowieża (1915-1919)*

The forests of Białowieża (Bialowies in German during the First World War experienced a German occupation that raises altogether new and difficult questions. The position of Białowieża is shown on map 2, page 356. Liulevicius described Białowieża

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid, p381.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, p387.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, p308.

<sup>82</sup> BA MA, PH3/ 410 GFP in Russia, Document 1, Die Arbeitsweise des russischen Nachrichtendienstes nach den Erfahrungen der geheimen Feldpolizei Ob. Ost in den Monaten August bis Oktober 1916.

<sup>83</sup> Liulevicius, 2000, p1, 'It is crucial to understand that when German soldiers invaded the lands of Eastern Europe under Nazi direction during the Second World War. It was not the first time that German armies had been there. Rather, the eastern front-experience of the First World War was an indispensable cultural and psychological background for what came later in the violent twentieth century, a pre-existing mentality.'

as primeval forest that contrasted sharply with the scientifically managed forests of Germany.<sup>84</sup> Historically, Russia had annexed and secured the area since the partition of Poland in the Eighteenth century. This was very wild and unspoiled land. The forest had been the hunting ground of the Tsars and contained a rich wildlife, set in the last surviving natural forests of Europe. All manner of wild animals including the European Bison roamed freely throughout the forests. This area was captured in August 1915, by Prince Leopold of Bavaria's Ninth Army.<sup>85</sup> When the Germans arrived in Białowieża, they were quickly taken with its romantic primitiveness. The combination of mystery and danger spurred thoughts toward an older Germanic romanticism. The forest had such a deep psychological impact upon the occupiers that some believed their deepest Germanic myths had been rekindled. The forests also provided the Germans with lumber and a vast array of natural resources.<sup>86</sup>

The military's own forestry troops entered the area in 1916, and by 1917, had begun publishing their own annual journal. Liulevicius discovered that Bavarian Forestry Councillor Major Escherich was given administrative command of the Military-Forestry Department in Białowieża. The inspector, Lieutenant General Frhr. von Seckendorff (Inspekteur der Etappeninspektion), had enacted the orders for the administration of the rear-area under which Białowieża was controlled. The area was soon cordoned into the security zone system as per the usual operating procedure for the rear-areas. In September 1915, he introduced the hunting regulations for the forest as a direct order from Ludendorff. Security remained a central issue as roving bands of Cossacks and bandits. The hunting or capture of these alleged 'criminals' led to their execution through shooting. Modern communications were introduced with telephones and telegraph with over 100 kilometres of cables that had to be secured from attacks. Transport in the winter was confined to panje-wagons (horse drawn carts) and railways if the lines were open; hence communications were vital to security. Military security seems to have been reinforced in 1918, to battalion level as an article in the journal by Captain von Genthe suggested.

In the presence of this great variety of wildlife, the Germans organised large scale sporting hunts as the journal itself delved into the practises of hunting. This microcosm

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<sup>84</sup> Liulevicius, 2000, pp27-28.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, p 20.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, p 27.

of occupation truly brings home the disparity between military policy and economic exploitation. The journal paints the picture of a gradual drift from security matters to deep scientific forestry.<sup>87</sup> However, the earlier editions of this journal present an altogether wider picture of the mechanics of German occupation in Białowieża. Innocuously the first journal began with the conquest of the area narrated by Captain Gruber. In part two Captain Dr. Voit discussed the forest area, the economic development and scientific exploitation.<sup>88</sup> The hunting offered the senior German officers relaxation. The book has pictures of Hindenburg and Prince Leopold of Bavaria during separate hunts. The paradise of hunting also became a place of science. The hunting personnel brought with them a department of zoologists to conduct scientific experiments upon the local wildlife. Anthropologists, from the Museum of Anthropology, Zoology and Ethnicity joined them from Dresden. By 1916, the area had become a centre for a broad range of academic and pseudo-academic disciplines, a massive natural history project. The skills employed included biologists, meteorologists, geologists, land-surveyors, cartographers, zoologists, botanists, scientific-photography, foresters, ornithologists; the variety suggested a university rather than a military occupation. A centre for animal dissection and wildlife study was erected that began to record its findings with pictures through the journal. As the journal continued it began to categorise all manner of wildlife with examples of skulls of dead animals.

The war had caused considerable damage to the immediate area, but allied economic blockade was used as the excuse for further destructive exploitation. In June 1916, the Germans had 3,000 Russian and Polish civilians and 1,000 Russian prisoners as war drafted in as labourers.<sup>89</sup> There were a hundred German soldiers deployed for security purposes. Women and children (we are not told how many) collected the sap from the trees and took it to dispersal points. We are poignantly shown a picture of two apparently 'happy' Jewish female (Harzmädchen) tree-sap collectors. The men worked on rebuilding the area and working in the forest economy. The conditions were quite disgusting. In this area of swamp and woodland diseases were rife such as malaria and

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<sup>87</sup> Herausgegeben von der Militärforstverwaltung Bialowies, *Bialowies in deutscher Verwaltung*, (Berlin, 1919).

<sup>88</sup> Hauptmann Dr. Voit, 'Die Erschließung des Urwaldes', in Herausgegeben von der Militärforstverwaltung Bialowies, *ibid*, (Berlin, 1917).

<sup>89</sup> Liulevicius, 2000, p72, 'A network of roads and railroads was built through the forest, while "a small army of POWs" and press-ganged natives provided labour: one official mentioned 5,000 workers in early 1916.'

typhoid. A clean up company (Reinigungskommando) was brought into the camp because of filth and human excrement had fouled the living quarters, 'excrement, rubble, and refuse' (...Mist, Schutt und Unrat).<sup>90</sup> The water was also dirty and the people were apparently covered in lice. The main diet was bread and potatoes in winter but later in spring this was widened to a series of vegetables. The hunting produced little, if any meat for the work force.

Both civilians and the prisoners of war were placed in a camp in Hajnowka, with security fences between the two groups. There was a total barrack capacity of 1,128. In the men's camps there were 480 places with a further capacity of 600 places for either workers or prisoners. There was a barracks for 129 soldiers, with an administration block that included the camp jail. There was pipe work that linked water to the central civilian food hall and the camp communal delousing centre. This delousing building, about 15 square metres, was erected at the centre of the camp where the workers came to be thoroughly deloused. The clothes were burnt on site and new clothes reissued following a communal shower. The workers were housed in purpose built barracks for at least 40 men. The facilities included a living room, kitchen and two communal sleeping rooms each for 20 men. There was no description of the prisoner quarters or the differences between the civilian and the prisoner of war barracks. Clearly, the primary concern was for sanitation, which was also hampered by darkness especially in the winter months. In the winter there were only three hours of daylight.<sup>91</sup>

The histories produced by the men of Białowieża indicate a deep and prior knowledge of the territory long before the occupation. The depth of the science of hunting and forestry was advanced and Białowieża attracted the leading figures in the furtherance of the research. In so doing the local population were marginalized. Once the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk had been signed the Germans believed they were going to keep the territory. In Captain Genthe's article, mentioned earlier, he warned against the attempts of the Kuban Cossacks who demanded the return of the lands on grounds of Tsarist ownership. He maintained that the area had been a subject of dispute for over 400 years between Russia and Poland. However, in an article that opened with a passage in old German, the lyrics of an ancient song (Nibelungenlied), he emphasised the longer links to an older Germanic past. Occupation had achieved a cultural link with the then

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<sup>90</sup> Dr. Voit, 1917, p40.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, p60.



modern sciences. By 1918, the theme of articles in the journal had gone beyond the realms of everyday occupation and deeply into the culture of forestry. The work in the forest became an extension of science, we know there were two railway workers' detachments because photographs of their interesting discoveries are recorded for prosperity. What happened to the workers remains unrecorded. The articles finish not with the retreat from Russia but a study of the microcosms of forestry life.

### Disturbing precedents from the East

The occupation of the forest of Białowieża 1917-1919, raises disturbing questions about German methods and intentions towards Eastern Europe. Białowieża itself was destined to fall under Nazi occupation. Drawing away from issues that will be raised later in chapters three and nine, the general tone behind German occupation methods began to form set routines and practices. The treatment of the labourers of Białowieża remains but a small record of these methods although we know nothing of the camp's rules or discipline. The existence of this labour camp has obvious connotations to the processes involved in the later genocide of the Jews. According to Margit Szöllösi-Janze, in Cracow German soldiers thought it amusing to gas-delouse the local 'dirty' Jews.<sup>92</sup> The scale of German civilian involvement in the occupied security zone is clearly discernible from this evidence. More importantly we find strong links with the university utilising occupied zones for cheap and unique research purposes. In 1915, in Cracow, the army built delousing camps where they cleansed soldiers' uniforms. It became accepted practice that local Jewish civilians were also deloused on the grounds of their inherent 'dirtiness'. In a letter from the President of the court in the district of Kottowitz, written in December 1941, referring to contemporary troubles in Poland, passed the comment on an earlier time, '...the anti-German treasonable activity is supposed to have increased to such an extent that comparisons with these situation in 1917 and 1918 are already permissible,...'<sup>93</sup>

As a contrast the eastern front also gave the Germans the opportunity to complain about being occupied by Russian forces, in tones of outrage and moral indignation. Even senior analysts entered Russian occupation methods into German military

<sup>92</sup> Margit Szöllösi-Janze, 'Poison gas, lice and mites: Fritz Haber (1868-1934) and the uses and abuses of science', paper presented at the Institute of Historical Research, University of London, 25 February 1999.

<sup>93</sup> IWM, IMT, 674-PS, letter from President of the High Court of Kattowitz to the Reich Ministry of Justice, Executions by the police and expediting of penal procedures without order.

folklore. A lecture by Senior Lieutenant von Ziehlberg delivered on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 1930, gave an illustration of the scale of German losses. East Prussia civilian casualties caused by the first Russian invasion in 1914-1915, included 1,620 deaths and 433 wounded. The Russians ‘evacuated’ 5,419 men, 2,587 women, and 2,719 children into Russia. Of the total number of German refugees (870,000) about 400,000 actually crossed the Weichsel (River Vistula). During the second Russian invasion, transport had already been planned and 175,000 were evacuated to the west. The invasions had led to the loss of large numbers of farm animals; horses 600,000, cattle 1,400,000, pigs 200,000, sheep 50,000, goats 10,000. The alleged destruction included 35 towns with 3,400 buildings and 1900 villages with 27,000 homes destroyed. In over four days (18-21<sup>st</sup> March 1915) the regional area of Memel suffered intense damage. Civilian losses included the forcible evacuation by the Russians of 458 German men women and children. The cost of destruction and plundering came to five million marks.<sup>94</sup> While such lectures continued to stoke the fears of the barbaric east they also illustrate how far Germany’s own methods, which were often harsh if not extremely ruthless, were rarely considered even remotely unjust:

There are fanatics in every nation. They are much more scarce in the German race than in other nations. Even during the Russian penetration into East Prussia in 1914-18, there were no partisans despite the well known atrocities.. The remnants of the French army were able to retreat through Prussia in 1807 without interference.’<sup>95</sup>

### III. Summary

As Basil Liddell-Hart observed, ‘Everything in war looks different at the time from what it looks in the clearer light that comes after the war.’<sup>96</sup> This was the case with the German security system, usually described as an example of wanton brutality with few discernable objectives. The German system of security was a consequence of an oversight during the drafting of the laws of war, namely confining conflict to the battlefield. The origins of *Bandenbekämpfung* date back to at least 1870, and possibly further still to the Thirty Years War. The actual German system of occupation security

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<sup>94</sup> NA, T78 role 8, frame 679205 to 679305, lectures in the officer schools by Oberleutnant von Ziehlberg, Berlin 1 May 1930. Interestingly he could bring Versailles into his lecture in a suitably negative tone.

<sup>95</sup> Gustav Hoehne, “‘Haunted Forests’: enemy partisans behind the front’, *Foreign Military Study*, (hereafter FMS), fiche C-037, 28 November 1948, p29.

<sup>96</sup> B.H. Liddell-Hart, *The Other Side of the Hill*, (London, 1951), p15.

that evolved into *Bandenbekämpfung* originated in 1870. Gradually this security model evolved, forming a standardised operating procedure. This development process peaked in the period between 1902 and 1918. This peak identified colonialism and total war as the pernicious influences as the forces of change. The impact was to broaden the perspective beyond the immediate demands of security. From the national perspective, security was directly linked to the war effort and the realisation of German war aims.

Following the Second World War, General of Infantry Friedrich Fangohr wrote that, 'An army cannot choose its theatre of operations like selecting goods in a well stocked store.'<sup>97</sup> In the context of German security policy and its territorial perspective, it was always directed towards European (east and west) operations. Namibia, however extreme, was traditional colonial conquest, which the imperial powers gradually discarded after 1919. It was the Nazis who imported such practices into Europe and Russia, in the drive toward *Lebensraum*. Securing conquest had its political dimensions. The crucial period of an occupation was the transfer from military to civilian administration, an overtly political act. The German system of occupation was radical that it brought its own political system with it, an integral part of the baggage of military bureaucracy. This model had been refined and honed through the combination of military tradition and the experience of war. However, by the Second World War the system had grown into an amalgam of competing political and military cultures.

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<sup>97</sup> Friedrich Fangohr, 'Region, climate, population and their influence on warfare in the Soviet Union', FMS P-071, Munich, December 1950-January 1951.

### **Chapter Two: The Nazi Security Establishment 1933-1939**

With internal roles added to their more normal external ones, the usual distinction between armed services and such state organisations as the Police and internal security agencies is no longer clear cut and well defined as before. Ironically, as armed services are employed more frequently to cope with internal threats, so police forces and security agencies have themselves apparently taken on more external functions.' There is a difference between these different types of forces and should be constantly recognised, police tend to be internal and armed services external.<sup>1</sup>

Before 1918, the German army had been the pillar of security behind the Imperial regime. After 1919, Germany experienced the process of searching for the most effective balance of internal security forces. From 1919, the combined effects of the Treaty of Versailles and reluctance by the army to interfere in the affairs of the Weimar Republic, the government were forced to look towards alternative solutions. With hindsight the logical answer was surely the employment of professional police forces. However, in 1919 the government turned instead to the expediency of employing armed militias to counter paramilitary revolutionary movements. It was an experiment that backfired in the end. The Freikorps not only brought the horrors of war to the streets of Germany cities but also pioneered a cult of security that was to plague Germany up until 1945. The outcome also led Germany into the realms of what today are referred to as counter-insurgency or national security, safeguarding against enemies within the state, with all available force. There were further knock-on effects that included the institutionalisation of counter-insurgency practices, and the perpetuation of a climate of suspicion for internal state enemies.

The evolution of the pre-war Nazi security establishment became the back drop for the transition to *Bandenbekämpfung*. During the 1920s and 1930s, the German security establishment turned Martin Edmonds' generalisation, concerning the distinction between the armed services and the police, on its head. The notion of security was at once extended beyond the scope of the army through to the police, which in turn embraced the militarization of the police. At the same time, organisations which had a large level of manpower and arms, were gradually turned into unofficial policemen, as in the case of the German state foresters (*Reichsforstamt*), who were then in turn militarised. This period of time is therefore crucial to our understanding for it

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<sup>1</sup> Edmonds, 1988, p25.

saw the radical progression of the ideas of permanent security systems and forces, central to Nazi doctrines of control and protection.

### **I. Private Armies - Public Duties (1918-1930)**

The most visible intrusion of the 'front generation' into German politics after 1918 was the activities of those officers who found a home in paramilitary and right wing groups after the War.<sup>2</sup>

The Freikorps were not a uniform body; regiments and battalions were raised from both veterans and men too young to have served in the war.<sup>3</sup> Initially, they were formed in Berlin, but new units sprung up throughout Germany; particularly on the national borders affected by the Versailles settlement. The Freikorps were a state sponsored mercenary force whose sole purpose was counter revolution. The first Freikorps units marched through Berlin in late 1918. They fought in street battles against similarly armed left-wing paramilitaries with the intention of restoring law and order. In reality it became their interpretation of martial law and order. One infamous unit, the Ehrhardt Brigade, was responsible for the assassination of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg the Spartacist Party leaders. The orders to attack them brought a phrase often repeated during the Bandenbekämpfung campaign, 'die Vernichtung der republikanischen Banden' (the destruction of the Republican bandits), the term Banden was openly espoused to castigate political opposition.<sup>4</sup> On what had been the German army's eastern front, soldiers still in service and an influx of volunteers from Germany alike used the pretext of saving the Baltikum (Baltic States), from the Bolsheviks and the Soviet Red Army, to unleash a pseudo-military campaign. In the end it led to utter collapse and disaster, but not before both sides had committed grievous atrocities. This was the other side of the Freikorps legend, that of defending the Fatherland against Bolshevism. Klaus Theweleit has examined some of the leading figures of the Freikorps through their memoirs. Many of these men were veteran soldiers who in the midst of

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Bessel, *Germany After The First World War*, (Oxford, 1993), p272.

<sup>3</sup> Various surviving Freikorps files: BA MA RM 61/v. 6-8 Schliesen, PH5 II/4 East Prussia, PH26/ 34 Schlesien korps, PH3/ 13 Grenzschutz Ost, PH26/ 33 and 39 Grenzschutz Posen, PH26/ Oberschliesen, Blatt II, Auszug aus den besonderen Anordnungen des G.K. VI A.K. v. 7<sup>th</sup> December 1918, Ziffer 16 - (Document 144), Massnahmen zur Sicherung der Wahlen am 19<sup>th</sup> January 1919 (Document 139), PH26/ 17,18,19,20, 26 Selbstschutz.

<sup>4</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm von Oertzen, *Die deutschen Freikorps 1918-1923*, (München,1936), p246 and see also Felix L. Carsten, *The Reichswehr and Politics, 1918 to 1933*, (Oxford, 1966).

defeat rekindled their faith through military and disciplinary orthodoxy.<sup>5</sup> The Kapp Putsch sealed the fate of the Freikorps but its adventures became mythologized through the Nazi propaganda machine. In 1942, German archivists were still recording the triumphs of the Freikorps in Germany and Austria for posterity.<sup>6</sup>

The Nazis deified the Freikorps, as the first 'political soldiers', it was a concept that they routinely identified with. Richard Bessel himself is not wholly convinced of the influence of the Freikorps.<sup>7</sup> He is critical of the attention it has received as an explanation for Nazism. He might be right, but once in power the Nazis made the most of the Freikorps myth. It is clear from later evidence that participation in the Freikorps was worthy of praise. The Nazis embellished the myth of the Freikorps experience into their propaganda. Many veterans of the Freikorps were to take significant positions within the Nazi regime and the later Bandenbekämpfung campaign, including Heinrich Himmler, Curt von Gottberg, Ernst Rode and Kurt Daluege. In 1936, the Nazi party produced what was intended as a definitive history, bringing a story together to form a heroic image of the first defender of the Fatherland in lieu of the arrival of the Nazis. The strength of this dogma was such that it became the shell upon which the SS were to be crafted.

The popularity of organisational secrecy was another National Socialist trait, a product of Weimar period military sub cultures. Links between the old imperial army, the Freikorps and the Reichswehr was established through the little known Schwarze Reichswehr (Black Reichswehr). During an interrogation on the 17<sup>th</sup> December 1945, Eric von dem Bach-Zelewski was asked what he knew of the Black Reichswehr.<sup>8</sup> He explained that it was intended to circumvent the Treaty of Versailles and the limitation of military forces. It was a secret organisation that had firm links with the army. Sir James Edmonds believed local politicians from along the German-Polish border encouraged the secrecy and growth in armed paramilitaries sponsored by the army where there had been troubles between 1919 and 1924.<sup>9</sup> Bach-Zelewski said it was not

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<sup>5</sup> Klaus Theweleit, *Male Phantasies*, (Minnesota, 1978).

<sup>6</sup> NA, T78, roll 9, frames 680926 to 681012. The recording of the Freikorps at this time in the Nazi history seems to constitute an usual contrast with the events taking place in Stalingrad.

<sup>7</sup> Bessel, 1993, pp272-274.

<sup>8</sup> BZ-IMT, 17 December 1945

<sup>9</sup> Sir James Edmonds, *The Occupation of the Rhineland 1918-1929*, (London, 1987).

formalised by permanent soldiers but raised under the Krümpersystem.<sup>10</sup> This system would be used to raise police battalions during wartime. The officer cadre was the only 'professional' element; Bach-Zelewski himself had been a battalion commander, while retaining his farm. They were the supplemental forces to the regular Reichswehr. Bach-Zelewski said he had been responsible for training and recruitment in the Frankfurt on the Oder area. It was his view that the units on the borders were larger than in the provinces, a total force he estimated at over 300,000. The officers recommended as trainers were themselves expected to have been trained in the ways of the Imperial army. This training was conducted on an individual basis and then by larger group exercises. Additional special training courses were arranged within these larger manoeuvres, which normally lasted a week. Large estate owners and nationalists apparently gave over their land for manoeuvres (presumably not where crops were being grown). Bach-Zelewski said that farmers had supplied the food for the volunteers in an act of 'patriotism'. In 1930 he said his unit volunteered to a man for the Allgemeine-SS (General SS), where it continued to increase its membership and military training.

## II. The SS Triumvirate

We shall take care that never again in Germany, the heart of Europe, will the Jewish-Bolshevistic revolution of sub-humans be able to be kindled either from within or through emissaries from without. Without pity we shall be a merciless sword of justice for all those forces whose existence and activity; we know on the day of the slightest attempt, may it be today, may it be in decades or may it be in centuries.<sup>11</sup>

The Schutzstaffel (SS) or Protection Squad had been originally formed in 1925 for the sole purpose of providing personal protection for Adolf Hitler, the leader of the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP).<sup>12</sup> The SS originally fell somewhere between the Freikorps and the Black Reichswehr. By 1943, some twenty years later, the SS had become a diverse accumulation of bureaucratic and executive functions. Hitler had

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<sup>10</sup> BZ-IMT, 17<sup>th</sup> December 1945, he used the analogy between the way potato pickers employed in Prussia to explain how troops were raised for the Black Reichswehr. In the Saarland potato pickers were said to be part of the Krumper system. Yet Craig, 1955, and Francis Loraine Petre, *Napoleon's Last Campaign in Germany-1813*, (London, 1912) both explained this in terms of the Prussian military reforms introduced by Scharnhorst in 1810.

<sup>11</sup> Wiener, IMT, 1851-PS, The SS as an Anti-Bolshevist Battle Organisation, 1936.

<sup>12</sup> Gerald Reitlinger, *The SS: Alibi of a Nation 1922-1945*, (London, 1956) and Robert Koehl, *The Black Corps: The Structure and Power Struggles of the Nazi SS*, (Minnesota, 1983).

already formulated his own ideas by 1925, for the future political soldiers of the NSDAP:

As an underlying principle in the internal development of the Storm Detachment (SA), we came to the decision that not only should it be perfectly trained in bodily efficiency but that the men should be so instructed as to make them indomitably convinced champions of the National Socialist ideas and, finally, that they should be schooled to observe the strictest discipline...It had to be an instrument of protection and education for the National Socialist Movement and its duties should be in quite a different sphere from that of the military defence association...What we needed then and need now is not one or two hundred daredevil conspirators but a hundred thousand devoted champions of our Weltanschauung.<sup>13</sup>

In 1929, Hitler promoted Heinrich Himmler to Reichsführer-SS (chief of the SS) with the mandate to increase SS political authority and power. Himmler organised a central office of the SS and in 1931 opened two further departments. The Sicherheitsdienst (SD), under Reinhard Heydrich, was an internal security bureau that monitored the affairs of German society and the daily routine of the NSDAP. The other was the SS Race and Settlement office formed under Richard Darré. During the 1930s the SS began to develop an ethos that mixed notions of blood and soil (Blut und Boden), with Hitler's racial political ideology and underlined by distorted memories of the Freikorps of defending the Reich. In these early years the leaders of SS installed a harsh regime of discipline; Hitler demanded blind obedience.<sup>14</sup> The publication of the groundbreaking 'Anatomie des SS Staates' changed the historical picture of the SS completely.<sup>15</sup> Helmut Krausnick, one of the authors, researched the SS persecution of the Jews from National Socialist origins of anti-Semitism to the introduction of the 'final Solution'. He pointed to the influence of social Darwinism on Nazi race ideology. Social Darwinist ideas were not solely applied to race; it was also the basis of leadership selection. Proven willingness to apply Darwinist principles to further oneself was encouraged by Himmler and most of his leading subordinates were enthusiastic to these methods. Competition in a 'dog-eat-dog' climate was normalised as acceptable

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<sup>13</sup> Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, James Murphy, (London, 1939), pp 426-453, see *Mein Kampf* with introduction by D.C. Watt, translated by Ralph Manheim, (London, 1992).

<sup>14</sup> The relationship between the SS and Hitler has been extensively covered by Martin Broszat, *The Hitler State*, (London, 1983); Alan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny*, (1990); Joachim C. Fest, *Hitler*, (London, 1977); and Reitlinger, 1956.

<sup>15</sup> Krausnick, et al, 1965.



behaviour. In fact many scholars have exposed the intentions of the SS leadership, but the scale of the organisation precludes the formulation of a perfect definition. Even the use of statistical analysis has only given us a small indication of the scope of the SS-Police world. Herbert Ziegler applied advanced statistical analysis to surviving data from pre-war SS personnel records to produce quantifiable conclusions on the organisation,

Unlike the military soldier who fights only in times of war against a clearly defined enemy, the political soldier was a kämpfer (warrior or fighter) who was engaged in an eternal struggle for existence (Daseinskampf).<sup>16</sup>

Before the SS could expand further it had to shake off its parent organisation the SA (Sturmabteilung). In a single bloody act the SS killed off the leading members of the SA:

The SS thirst for blood increased hourly. They soon ceased to be content with the official victims, the mutineers and enemies of the state, and turned over to a campaign of personal vengeance. Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, an SS Oberabschnitt Commander, sent two SS men to deal with his rival, the SS Cavalry leader, Anton Freiherr von Hohenberg und Buchwald; they shot him down from behind in his own smoking room on his estate. When his 17 year old son rushed in, one of them said casually: 'We have just shot your father' - and calmly went away.<sup>17</sup>

Heinrich Himmler, Kurt Daluge and Reinhard Heydrich were the three men responsible for bringing the SS-Police establishment into what became a position of considerable influence by 1942. This project was achieved in less than six years. State law had decreed the convergence of the SS and Police on the 17th June 1936.<sup>18</sup> It followed an internal competition between Hermann Göring (with his cohorts Kurt Daluge and Artur Nebe) who had challenged Heinrich Himmler and Reinhard Heydrich, who were also eager for control of the police. Once Himmler got his way, his direction was simple as to how the SS and the Police were going to be employed in the

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<sup>16</sup> Herbert F. Ziegler, *Nazi Germany's New Aristocracy: The SS leadership, 1925-1939*, (USA, 1989), pp 7-9.

<sup>17</sup> Heinz Höhne, *The Order of the Death's Head: The Story of the SS*, (London, 1969)t, p111, footnote, from *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 19 June 1961.

<sup>18</sup> This subject is very well covered by Ulrich Herbert, *Best, Biographische Studien über Radikalismus, Weltanschauung und Vernunft 1903-1989*, (Stuttgart, 1996) and see also IMT 1852-PS, *The German Police*, by Dr. Werner Best, 1940.

forth-coming war. In a surprisingly farsighted speech he spelled out the manpower and function of the new organisation:

We must clearly realise, that Bolshevism is the organisation of the sub-humans, it is the absolute foundation of Jewish sovereignty, it is the exact contrary of all that is dear to an Aryan people.

I picture the scope of obligations in case of war as follows:

The police of course would, according to their duty as I see it, be able to give up a maximum of 15,000 to 20,000 men (not more) to the Wehrmacht as soldiers. I have a total of 80,000 to 90,000 uniformed police. It must be taken into consideration that a large part of the uniformed police is over or at least over 40, so that if I should give up 15,000 to 20,000, I really would give up the backbone of this police. I can substitute men over 55 or 60 whom I may reactivate. That could be done if unavoidable. However, it is possible only if I assure myself of an Eingreiftruppe (strike force) which I can use for large scale projects. These are the Deaths Head units. By and large, I can get along with this old police forces. I can carry out the all the former tasks of the Landsturm i.e. guarding munitions factories, railroad crossings etc. with civilians over 45, who would be drafted as auxiliary police as planned provided I have as a backbone a troop that is young. For this the Deaths Head Units are provided, ranging in age from 25 to 35, not older and not younger.

I do not wish to have any very young nor any old persons, for the sabotage and terror troops consist of young, very lively persons with the most modern equipment. This opponent cannot be fought with old Landsturm personnel.

It is the obligation of the SS and of the police to solve positively the problem of internal security.<sup>19</sup>

### Building the SS-Police Establishment

Five short years had elapsed since the Röhm purge. During them the SS had made itself indispensable to the Führer-dictatorship.<sup>20</sup>

The organisational analysis of the SS has long held a central place in the overall historiography. The SS was a complex organisation, made up of many diverse major and minor offices. The structure of the SS changed a number of times between 1931, and the end of the war. There were also several branches of membership, which generally determined the direction of the future SS career. The general branch of the

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<sup>19</sup> NA, IMT, 1992-A-PS, National Political Course for the Armed Forces, from 15<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1937, restricted for the armed forces.

<sup>20</sup> Koehl, 1983, p155.

organisation was known as the Allgemeine-SS and formally existed from December 1934. This was the main body of the SS made up of full and part time volunteers. All new recruits were admitted into the SS through this branch before 1939. This handled the main bureaucratic functions from the local units up to the headquarters of the SS. The Allgemeine-SS provided the bulk of SS manpower with recruiting rising to a peak of over 240,000 before 1939. Many of the senior SS leaders including most of the Gruppenführers remained members of the Allgemeine-SS while undertaking other specialist duties within the police-military wings. Leading dignitaries and personalities of the regime were given honorary SS membership (SS-Ehrenführer) through this branch. With the outbreak of war many of these members were mobilised into either the militarised SS or the Wehrmacht. Although the Allgemeine-SS remained active to the end of the war its numbers dwindled to less than 40,000 by 1945.

The central departments included Himmler's personal office and represented the highest bureaucratic level of the SS. Some historians have likened the SS command structure to the Jesuit movement.<sup>21</sup> In the early days there were only one or two departments (Hauptämter) but as the SS expanded new offices were added. Robert Koehl listed the increase in the SS during the 1930s. The SS Offices included the SS-Hauptamt (SS Main Office) created 20 January 1935; the SS-Rasse-und Siedlungs-Amt (Race and Resettlement Main Office) was created in January 1935 and handled ideological training, family welfare of SS members, racial selection and liaison with German Agriculture; the SS-Sicherheitshauptamt (Secret Police Main Office); 1939, the economic and commercial office the SS-WVHA. The SS-Führungshauptamt (the Leadership office) became the central office of the SS officer corps. The Persönlicher Stab (Reichsführer-SS personal office) was expanded through the employment of large numbers of adjutants. The police forces from 1936, will be discussed later. The Concentration Camps from 1935, were assigned to the control of the SS-Totenkopfverbände (Death's head troops). The Verfügungstruppe (militarised detachments) were introduced from 1934, later becoming central to the Waffen-SS. In 1938 the Recruitment Office, which would become responsible for the expansion of the Waffen SS was opened, and was recognised by Koehl as an important move:

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<sup>21</sup> Heinz Höhne, 1969, p124, see also Gerald Reitlinger and Robert Koehl who have all referred to the similarity to the Jesuit order.

Of course, the ability to continue to draw unto itself cadres of skill and competence from all walks of German life rested in part on its own intrinsic claims as “a sworn community of blood,” as a community of families (Sippengemeinschaft); but the war would bring to the SS an external motivation - the desire on the part of the able and the ambitious to enter what appeared to be the system of power and decision in Germany. To win the war and to shape the future required membership in the SS.<sup>22</sup>

In 1937, Himmler introduced the regional office of Higher SS and Police Leader (HSSPF),<sup>23</sup> it was to become a most crucial innovation within the SS system. This function co-ordinated regional offices and departments toward a centralised control mechanism. Birn believed the myth of the chaotic SS administration was in fact false; the system was effective and it enabled Himmler to run a continental wide system of control from Berlin. Birn identified the qualities demanded by Himmler for any high office within the SS and especially the HSSPF. Beyond his personal knowledge of each candidate, Himmler demanded trust with proven ability; he did not want bureaucrats or academics but men of action. Individuals with strong aggressive qualities, ideological crusaders, of good Aryan blood and with leadership qualities were allowed to conduct themselves with a completely free hand. They were not provided with guidelines, initiative was their only guidance. These men were the godfathers of repressive power, with complete freedom of action and were drawn from the senior ranks of the Allgemeine-SS. Their direct link to Himmler enabled him to maintain his authority over the main SS offices as well as the local branches at one and the same time.

Himmler strove to create the basis of a distinct officer class like that of the Wehrmacht. The existence of an SS officer corps did not disguise the perpetual struggle of competition between the members. The theoretical methodology behind the officer class was the Führerprinzip (leadership principle) which has been described by Karl Dietrich Bracher:

The Third Reich claimed to be a social, classless community of all Germans and at the same time a superior command structure girded for battle. The function of the leader principle lay in the blending of these two order concepts. It combined the political-charismatic combat idea of the ‘movement’ with the bureaucratic-military order idea of the authoritarian

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<sup>22</sup> Koehl, 1983, p156.

<sup>23</sup> Ruth Bettina Birn, *Die Höheren SS-und Polizeiführer: Himmlers Vertreter im Reich und in den besetzten Gebieten*, (Berlin, 1986).

state.<sup>24</sup>

In practical terms it was Hitler who delegated power to whom-so-ever he chose. After 1936 these positions tended to be given to members of the SS. It is often overlooked that SS officer ranks ended with the cognomen Führer (i.e. Gruppenführer or group-leader). Robert Koehl came to the conclusion that the corps was deluged in intrigue and power struggle.<sup>25</sup> Irrespective of the dynamics of the SS order, Hitler and Himmler remained true to their principles of social Darwinism; ensuring that there was cut-throat competition between office holders, and department chiefs. Himmler's influential adjutant Karl Wolff, although never formally empowered, was to manage the SS officer corps. Koehl saw in Wolff the man behind the throne in the formative years of the development of the SS. This informal role of controller or co-ordinator only continued until 1943 when he took up a special posting in Italy.

### III. Kurt Daluege: Militarization of the German Police

The sphere of duties of the Main Office of the Ordnungspolizei includes police administration as well as the management and direction of the protective police (Schutzpolizei) of the Reich, the gendarmes, the protective police of the community (Gemeinde), the water protection police (Wasserschutzpolizei), the air protection police (Luftschutz), the fire protection police (Feuerschutzpolizei), the protective groups in the occupied territories (Schutzmannschaft), the colonial police, the volunteer fire department, the compulsory and youth fire departments, the technical aid and the technical SS and police academy.<sup>26</sup>

One of the most important figures of the Nazi regime was Kurt Daluege. In terms of historical analysis he is one of those often referred to but hardly scrutinised. His alleged nickname was 'Dummi-Dummi' and his state of health upon capture and his enforced political exile after 1943, have tended to place him in the backwater of mainstream study. In many respects he was more powerful and influential than Reinhard Heydrich was. He was probably involved in all the major policy-making of the SS and was one of Hitler's trusted men. Kurt Daluege was the son of a Generalkommissar Secretary of Frankfurt on the Oder. As a schoolboy he was accused of bullying and required

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<sup>24</sup> Karl Dietrich Bracher, *The German dictatorship: The Origins, Structure, and Consequences of National Socialism*, (London. 1970), p423.

<sup>25</sup> Koehl, 1983.

<sup>26</sup> NA, IMT, 2640-PS translation of Dr. Robert Ley (ed), *Organisation Book of the NSDAP*, (Munich, 1943), pp 417-428.

discipline.<sup>27</sup> He left the Real-gymnasium in 1916, under the special rules for young men wishing to join the army. On the 2 August 1916, he joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> Guards Regiment training as a machine-gunner he later joined the 7<sup>th</sup> Guards Regiment. He entered the frontline on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 1916, during the Battle of Verdun. Apart from a brief period on the eastern front in Riga during 1917, he spent most of his time on the western front. He received the Iron Cross 2<sup>nd</sup> Class, and rose to the rank of Vizefeldwebel in February 1918. On the 1 April 1918, he was severely wounded and remained a patient in military hospitals until 11 October 1918. He was finally demobilised on the 9<sup>th</sup> January 1919. Between 1919 and 1923, he was deeply involved in the politics of the revolutionary and early Weimar period. In 1922, he joined Freikorps Rossbach and remained with them until 1923. Later he was enlisted into the Schwarze Reichswehr. Daluege was still listed as a semi-disabled soldier. After the war he attended the Technische Hochschule in Berlin where he undertook a degree in engineering. Following his university qualification he undertook a series of jobs between February 1924 and February 1933. One of those jobs included being a department leader in a waste disposal firm. Daluege became a Nazi Party member on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 1926, with the cherished a low membership number (31,981). He was a member of the SA from 1926 to 1930. He left the SA and joined the SS on the 25<sup>th</sup> July 1930, becoming SS-Obergruppenführer in 1934. In keeping with the times he changed his religion, along with many SS leaders, in 1936, becoming gottgläubig (a believer without denomination).

Daluege had taken part in the 'night of the long knives' and was instrumental in the poor police response to the mob violence during the Kristallnacht of 1938. The first major incident between both organisations occurred in April 1931, with the Stennes Revolt. It was during this aborted revolt that Daluege became amongst Hitler's most trusted persons. It was he who had given Hitler the tip-off and as a reward received a letter declaring him a most trusted man.<sup>28</sup> The SA had failed to match up to Hitler's demands; it lacked both the discipline and the desire to fulfil his political ambitions. By 1934 the SA represented to Hitler an uncontrollable force led by a potential rival in

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<sup>27</sup> NA, Kurt Daluege BDC papers, T580 roll 218, document 1, frame 0378, 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1914, Professor Schirmer to Generalkommissions-Sekretär Daluege.

<sup>28</sup> As in all cases with the Nazis this term directed by Hitler toward Daluege was taken by Himmler and used on the SS belt buckle, to enshrine the honour.

Ernst Röhm. The relationship between the SA and SS at this time ranged between conciliation, acrimony and hostility.<sup>29</sup> Once Hitler became chancellor in 1933, the SS worked to consolidate his and its own power. However, the SA continued to call for further National Socialist revolution. Röhm also had designs on the regular army and saw in the SA the potential for an alternative National Socialist military system. The general deterioration in the relationship between Hitler and Röhm continued into 1934. An opportunity arose to completely emasculate the SA as a political force in June 1934, when the German army, now deeply suspicious of the SA, offered to assist Hitler and the SS. During the infamous 'night of the long knives', the SS murdered Ernst Röhm and many of his lieutenants of the SA. This effectively destroyed any interior NSDAP opposition to the SS and Hitler in recompense for their loyalty stated in July 1934,

In view of highly meritorious service on the part of the SS, especially in connection with the events of 30 June 1934, I elevate it to the status of an independent organisation within the NSDAP. The Reichsführer-SS is therefore like the Chief of Staff (of the SA), directly subordinate to the supreme SS Führer. The Chief of Staff and the Reichsführer-SS are both invested with the Party rank of Reichsleiter.<sup>30</sup>

Daluege entered the Prussian Ministry of Interior in February 1933, working directly for Hermann Göring, being promoted to General of the Landespolizei in 1934. In 1936, Himmler promoted him to Chef der Ordnungspolizei, where he remained until June 1943. Kurt Daluege himself was not himself a trained police officer and so was dependent upon a capable as well as trusted officer corps. Hitherto the view has been held that the juncture of the SS and police saw the latter take over the leadership of a unified police force from 1936. This story cannot be sustained through close study of the leadership circle of Kurt Daluege's SS-Hauptamt Ordnungspolizei. Three important factors become clear very early on. Firstly, he and his management team were of the same age; secondly, they all shared common experiences of the First World War; and thirdly, they had all become Nazi party members well before the takeover of power. These men were all long serving senior police officers from the Weimar Republic. They made the decision to join one extremist group during a period of time when the

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<sup>29</sup> This subject is extensively covered by Koehl 1983, Reitlinger 1955 and Höhne 1969.

<sup>30</sup> N & P, vol. 3, document 131, 20<sup>th</sup> July 1934, p185.

Republic's political problems were caused by political extremism. How this affected upon their regular duties can only be speculated about at this stage.

If a man is what he reads then Daluge did not appear to fit the slight 'Dummi-Dummi'. Remarkably, the details of his property which was listed for an insurance policy issued by the Gerling Globale Insurance Company upon his transfer to Prague, to take over Reinhard Heydrich's position, following the assassination, has survived. The books included the usual list of the party line, but there were some other notable texts. The main works of Clausewitz, T.E. Lawrence (of Arabia), Karl Haushofer, Michael Prawdin (works on Genghis Khan), Kaiser Wilhelm II, Shakespeare (in translation), Goethe, a large collection of hunting and photographic books.<sup>31</sup> In discussions, meetings and correspondence between Himmler and Daluge there is strong evidence that the two men were learning from the lessons of the Great War. On 28<sup>th</sup> July 1937, Daluge wrote to Himmler referring to an article in 'Wehrgedanken des Auslandes' by General Fuller "Die Entwicklung des totalen Krieges". Himmler responded to Daluge stating that he was a regular subscriber and that issues 2-7-8 were particularly interesting in regards to the subject of the Great War.<sup>32</sup>

#### **IV. The Uniformed Police**

In 1936, Heinrich Himmler took control of the German police to become Reichsführer-SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei (RFSSuChdDtPol). Reinhard Heydrich became Chief of the SD, Gestapo and the Kriminalpolizei (Kripo); he planned to centralise all the state investigative police and NS internal security forces. Heydrich employed German intellectuals, and he is remembered for the insidious use of these academics in the gruesome Einsatzgruppen murder operations. The style of bureaucracy that Heydrich favoured was detailed, organised and thorough; his intelligence files covered all levels of Nazi Germany. Heydrich, with the assistance of men such as Dr. Werner Best, began to build the secret police forces with the criminal branches of the police into force of specialist. Much research dedicated to this theme and there is little to add to the

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<sup>31</sup> Richard Breitman, *The Architect of Genocide: Himmler and the Final Solution*, (London 1991), pp39-43, The books by Prawdin covered the history of Genghis Khan, and Breitman suggests Hitler set great store behind this author's work and to have recommended them to Himmler who introduced them into the SS libraries.

<sup>32</sup> NA, Daluge, T580, roll 215, frame 20081, internal correspondence July-August 1937.



argument here.<sup>33</sup> The senior police training school described the purpose of the new police force:

The Reichsführer-SS became Chief of the German Police and united its mission, as elastic as operative, with its formations into a comprehensive line of defence for fighting political as well as criminal enemies of the Nation; a line of defence in which State and party, civil servant and political soldier labour in a complete and therefore, for the first time in a positive manner hand in hand. For the first time the newly attained meaning of the Police as representative, protector, and helper of the community of the people, and thereby as real soldiers of that community of the people and of the National Socialist ideology, impressed the new features of this clear, sober countenance. For out of this original police, employed with a negative aim, an active friend and helper of the people has come into being, a rejuvenated people's troop, whose successors are provided from the SS, so that the civil servant, both within and outside of his service, is and remains an SS-man, a champion and protector of the new state, of the community of the people and of the movement.<sup>34</sup>

The SD supplied internal security reports on the occupied territories, recoded the movements of partisan groups and participated in anti-partisan operations.<sup>35</sup> The earliest institutional study of the security police, written by Bramstedt, concentrated on the sociological context of policing and coercion. According to Bramstedt, Himmler's notion of the soldier-official was a pretext for the socialisation of the police into the SS. The soldier-official would become a new social class within Nazi society.<sup>36</sup> George Browder<sup>37</sup> has gone beyond Bramstedt in researching the SD/Gestapo bureaucracy and its direct influence on the Nazi movement. Robert Gellately<sup>38</sup> has studied the local Gestapo papers from Würzburg and discovered deliberate manipulation of the system by the local populace (informing on friends and associates). There was a level of reliance on informant driven sources of information was used in the fight against the partisan, how far this was taken in decision-making is difficult to ascertain.

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<sup>33</sup> Herbert, Ulrich, *Best, Biographische Studien über Radikalismus, Weltanschauung und Vernunft 1903-1989*, (Bonn, 1996). Friedrich Wilhelm, *Die Polizei im NS-Staat*, (Paderborn, 1997).

<sup>34</sup> NA, IMT, 2284-PS, Writings of the Hochschule for Politics, Brochure 33, The SS: History, Mission, and Organisation of the Schutzstaffeln of the NSDAP, by Gunter d'Alquen, Berlin 1939.

<sup>35</sup> Helmut Krausnick, *Hitlers Einsatzgruppen: Die Truppe des Weltanschauungskrieges 1938-1942*, (Frankfurt, 1985).

<sup>36</sup> Ernest K. Bramstedt, *Dictatorship and Political Police*, (London, 1945), p98.

<sup>37</sup> George Browder, *Hitler's Enforcers: The Gestapo and SS Security Service in the Nazi Revolution*, (London, 1996).

<sup>38</sup> Robert Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society*, (Oxford, 1991).

Daluege's leadership principle came down to the primary intention of the militarization of the police; turning the police into honourable soldiers of the state, police soldiers. In effect Daluege planted and assimilated notions of ideology and identity into the uniformed police branches between 1936, and 1943. This was in keeping with Himmler's attitude toward the SS and suggests an element of harmonisation in the thoughts of the two men. The take-over of the police by Himmler in 1936 had direct repercussions on German wartime security policy and especially within *Bandenbekämpfung*, its roots can be traced to the efforts of Kurt Daluege. Whereas research has focused upon the formulation of the security police establishment between Himmler and Heydrich; there is virtually no work on the relationship between Himmler and Daluege in the establishment of the SS and uniformed police institution. We know from Himmler's appointments diary that he was talking with Daluege daily. Even when Heydrich was alive there was more contact between Daluege and Himmler than with the latter. We have to accept that although Daluege had influential friends in Hitler and Göring, his work in building the SS-Police empire was a joint effort. Himmler appears to have trusted him, especially to run matters in Prague following Heydrich's assassination in 1942. Unfortunately there is really very little research into this relationship.

To understand what Daluege brought to the SS can be seen in early documents and speeches before the centralisation process of 1936. His primary interest lay in the Jewish problem and the reform as well as reorganisation of the police. In a published press notice he opened with the motto for today, 15 Decembers 1934, 'We are fanatical National Socialists and not tightrope walkers on the so-called middle line, A. Hitler.' He began with the reform of the German police:

Under 14 years of Marxist rule the Prussian police had lost its self-assurance and believed it could no longer police the state... The Prime Minister Hermann Göring immediately started with the reorganisation of the Prussian police after the take-over.

#### What are the police for?

The task is to guarantee public order and security. This concept has become exceptionally blurred within the system... They have had to remodel the Prussian police inwardly and externally... The national socialist state leadership has had to obviously make firm intentions to make firm ends with both political and apolitical criminality. That it was the will of the state

leadership to carry out these matters practically with reliability, power and circumspection. This was carried out in the meantime in the only possible way by cleaning out of the bureaucratic manpower. As is well known, the executive police consist of four uniformed divisions country police; police force, rural police and municipality execution police and three not uniformed divisions (detective force, secret Special Branch and administration police)

#### Soldier spirit in the police

If one ties together the best Prussian and German traditions and one cultivates the military spirit in the German police. This same tradition which once was regarded as the classic example of order and safety in the whole world, and which made the inner peace the platform for outstanding advancement. The future police organisational foundation is now sufficient, shall be carried by the old spirit undisturbed by strikes and unrest, living and working to combat criminals and the German people can be happy and content.<sup>39</sup>

Almost immediately from his assumption of office in the Prussian Ministry of Interior, Daluge became passionately involved in all matters concerning the Jewish question. In a letter received on the 24 April 1933, from the National Socialist representative in the A.E.G. (large industrial concern) central offices in Berlin, it is clear that anti-Semitic practises were being introduced from the beginning of the regime.<sup>40</sup> Of a work force of 30,000, concerns over the employment of Jews and Marxists had led to discussions between the workers representatives, the management and NS advisers. The decision came down to the removal of 22 Jews temporarily and later the permanent removal of 10 Jews. There was concern that they should be properly paid off, but that it was essential to have them removed to ensure order in the work place. A prior meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April, had seen 1,500 manual and white-collar workers demand the removal by the weekend of the 10 Jews in question. It was recommended that the future safety of these Jews could no longer be guaranteed.

In a speech entitled, 'The Jew question as principle! The first defensive measures' Daluge made it clear that the problems facing the police were driven by how Germany dealt with the Jews:

For the first time in the history of crime - the crimes of the Jew are verified

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<sup>39</sup> NA T580, roll 219, document 20, frame 0994, Politischer Presse-dienst, Preußischer Presse-dienst der N.S.D.A.P. Number 291, and 'The motto for today, 15<sup>th</sup> Decembers 1934'.

<sup>40</sup> NA Daluge T580, roll 219, *ibid*.

through official statistics, this didn't happen because the national socialist state requires a justification for the methods to deal with the Jew question... The malice of the foreign press has not resulted in these official figures about the criminal deed of the Jew as an attempt at self-justification for the legal measures introduced in the name of the German people.... On 15 May 1918 the central office for the organization of German citizens of Jewish faith made a public protest having identified that arrested pickpockets were mostly Polish and Galician Jews... In Berlin and in all cities of Germany, predominantly in the bigger spas, railway stations and particularly on the international special trains pickpocket crime was almost exclusively executed by 'men and women of Moses faith'... One of the most urgent tasks consists to move the population statistics to a basis corresponding to the race policy knowledge. The Jew that disguises himself as Roman Catholic, as protestant and as dissenter or falsely as a foreigner must be recognised by the authorities as a Jew. At the moment, considerations are still in line about the usefulness of the different methods to be used...

Ominously Daluge concluded with a remark that would be in keeping with later decisions:

The wish of the Führer serves as a guideline to all our efforts in this direction. This obliges us to use methods in our work, which satisfy the dignity of the national socialist state. We will guard against the employment of rash and well-considered solutions, along with homemade methods, which does not do justice to the seriousness and the meaning of the Jew question.<sup>41</sup>

### The Ordnungspolizei

The Order Police had scarcely been taken into account in pre-war mobilization plans, and little thought had been given to possible wartime use, but Germany's military success and rapid expansion quickly created the need for more occupation forces behind the lines.<sup>42</sup>

There is a rich literature on the German and Prussian police, but their central role in Bandenbekämpfung has been completely overlooked.<sup>43</sup> From 1936, all the uniformed

<sup>41</sup> NA, Kurt Daluge, T580, roll 219, frame 0990, document number 32, Judenfrage als Grundsatz!

<sup>42</sup> Christopher Browning, 1992, p6.

<sup>43</sup> See the following works, Alf Lüdtke has written a history of the Prussian police during the early nineteenth century which provides an interesting background to German policing Alf Lüdtke, *Police and State in Prussia, 1815-1850*, (Cambridge, 1982), in Frank Thomason, 'Uniformed Police in the City of Berlin under the Empire', in Emilio C. Viano and Jeffrey H. Reiman (ed), *The Police in Society*, (USA, 1975), Chapter 10. Jürgen Thomanek, 'Police and Public Order in the Federal Republic of Germany', in John Roach and Jürgen Thomanek (ed), *Police and Public Order in Europe*, (Kent, 1985),. Peace as the first duty of the citizen was enshrined into Prussian law and police thinking. Following the great defeat at Jena in 1806, the police president of Berlin said, 'Jetzt ist Ruhe die erste Bürgerpflicht' (Now calm is the citizen's first duty), p148.

branches of the German police were collected under the Ordnungspolizei (the Order Police, known as Orpo) and controlled through the authority of the Reichsführer-SS, Heinrich Himmler. In the case of the Orpo, the 1930s saw the coming together of a whole series of police and paramilitaries; the SA-Feldkorps, the Schutzpolizei, the Technische Nothilfe (technical emergency), Feuerlöschpolizei (fire investigators) and the Wasserschutzpolizei. In 1932 the Order Police had an establishment of Schutzpolizei 88,100, Bavarian Landespolizei 5,700, Gendarmerie 16,408, Gemeindepolizei 15,822, Feuerlöschpolizei 10,000, and Freiwilligen Feuerwehren (volunteer firemen) 2,500.000. Their total armaments were 31,000 rifles, 4,690 machine pistols, 120 armoured cars, and 93,800 side arms. From a population of Germany in the 1930s, of about seventy-five million the police were not as large as we might first expect. Herbert Reinke identified a tendency toward a military bearing within the Prussian police of Imperial Germany.<sup>44</sup> He identified the source of its manpower as one cause of this tendency and the constables' place within the state:

[T]he basic role of the policeman in Imperial Germany: he is a bureaucratic-soldier. The policeman's background was military, his overall appearance and habit was military, hierarchical structures within the police were military, and finally the policeman's attitudes and behaviour towards the public were military.<sup>45</sup>

The other question asked of the Orpo was its political reliability. In late 1933, Kurt Daluge reported to Hitler that 200 police officers (7.3%) and 826 constables (1.7%) had been removed from the Schutzpolizei since coming to power. Bessel suggests it was the men who had been trained at the police schools who were to experience great advancement under the Nazis.<sup>46</sup> Daluge's most important deputy in the late 1930s was Generalleutnant der Ordnungspolizei Adolf von Bomhard. He had been an officer in a Bavarian infantry regiment. In 1934, he joined the Bavarian Landespolizei in 1919, until 1934. From 1934 he worked in Berlin and became important in the reorganisation process of the police after 1936. In 1942, he took up the key position of Inspector of the Ordnungspolizei police schools. In June 1945, he was

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<sup>44</sup> Herbert Reinke, "'Armed as if for a War': The State, the Military and Professionalisation of the Prussian Police in Imperial Germany", in, Clive Emsly and Barbara Weinberger (ed), *Policing Western Europe: Politics, Professionalism and Public Order, 1850-1940*, (London, 1991).

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p56.

<sup>46</sup> Bessel, 1993, pp202-204.

regarded as hardly important to the war crimes process. This is a demonstration of the allies' lack of appreciation of the central role of the police within Nazi policy-making.<sup>47</sup>

One branch of the uniformed police, Technische Nothilfe (TN) was typical of the forces that would play a major part in the transfer from Weimar government to the Nazi regime. On the 12<sup>th</sup> January 1919, Defence Minister Noske formalised the formation of the TN. It was intended to be a voluntary organisation of professionals, technicians, experts and craftsmen. The TN was a technical force intended to ensure that the essential services remained free from attacks by strikers, revolutionaries or saboteurs.<sup>48</sup> According to Junecke the TN's main purpose was protection against strikes in essential industries and security for industry behind front lines in wartime.<sup>49</sup> He provided data for the analysis in Table 2. The TN units were usually raised in important metropolitan and industrial centres like Berlin and the Ruhr. Agriculture was usually only a secondary concern; usually gas, coal, electricity, water and the movement of freight were the principal industries to benefit.

**Table 2: List of political incidents involving the Technische Nothilfe(1921-1924)<sup>50</sup>**

	ESSENTIAL INDUSTRY	RELIEF PROJECTS	
Year	Workers on their own	Work carried with TN	TN only
1921	24%	24%	52%
1922	22%	18%	60%
1923	34%	31%	35%
1924	15%	22%	63%
	Activities 1919-1923		
Energy plants and works	309 operations	170,000 TN men employed	
Agriculture	1471 operations		
Food	404 operations		
Transportation	636 operations	Includes 1922 railway strike	used 18,000 TN workers
Mining	43		
Health	58		
Natural disasters	84		
	Vocations within TN		
	% of TN members	Employment 1919-23	
Technicians	21%	32%	
Craftsmen	13%	7%	
Labourers	10%	28%	
Students	6%	11%	
Others	16%	16%	
Farmers	22%	5%	

<sup>47</sup> NA T1270, roll 23, frame 0519, interrogation of Adolf von Bomhard, 27<sup>th</sup> June 1945.

<sup>48</sup> Major General of Police Walther C. Junecke, FMS D-0109, 'Technische Nothilfe', 10th April 1947.. He submitted a plan on the 11 May 1945 to Eisenhower which was ignored. He had served as 3 years in emergency service, 8 years as district leader, 14 years as state commander. Served one year in the operations office in Berlin. In 1947 he was in Garmisch POW camp but still signed himself Landesführer und Generalmajor der Polizei.

<sup>49</sup> NA, FMS, D-109, *ibid*.

<sup>50</sup> The source of this table is NA, FMS, D-109. The table provides an indication of the nature and construction of these police forces that were later to play a pivotal role in Nazi occupations with forced labour, officially sanctioned plundering and genocide.

Women	12%	1%	
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Training was organised as and when needed. Following a railway strike in 1921, 2,500 railway men were trained as emergency loco men, stokers, switch operators and guards. Training alerts focused upon billets, food, transport, registration, and leadership. During the 1922 Railway general strike, these men, as volunteers, ensured the railways continued to run beyond a skeleton service. In the opinion of Junecke it took the Nazis nine months to agree to keep the TN because of its unreliability. From the police mobilisation records found amongst OKW records the case of the TN (and in particular the Königsberg railway section) survived indicating levels of political memberships as well as military experience of its members. The total complement in 1935 was 686 men and seventeen women; of which 192 were members of the SA, twenty-nine in the SS and a further ten involved in other police forces. The military experience of 232 men included fourteen from the Feldgendarmerie and Grenzschutz.<sup>51</sup>

Later papers provide two snapshots of life in the TN under the Nazis. On the 20<sup>th</sup> December 1940, the central offices of the TN issued a general notice from Himmler that the forth-coming film, 'Jud Süß' was available for the members of the German police service and families for special viewing.<sup>52</sup> On the 21<sup>st</sup> November 1941, the TN were issued with details of an SS order on suicide, originally produced in 1939. In it was highlighted the past problems with suicides caused by the jealousies and fear of exams, and so forth. It also showed how the costs of the funeral would burden families still further. The point is not that it was issued in 1939, to members of the SS but that it was passed to the TN to be distributed to all sectors.<sup>53</sup> A poignant comment of how the members of the TN had to be taught about the perils of suicide. In January 1941, Kurt Daluge praised the role of the TN in the war in a paper entitled 'The Ordnungspolizei in the war from Narvik to Bessarabia'. It had worked in their technical capacities to maintain essential industries and buildings in the occupied territories of Belgium and France.

The Ordnungspolizei officer corps, known party membership of its senior officers, in 1939, was exactly 1400 of which 370 were regarded as old party comrades from before 1933. On the 17 January 1939, the numbers of Schutzpolizei in the SS were as

<sup>51</sup> NA T77, roll 241, frames 983589 to 983789, OKW mobilisation preparations 1934-1942.

<sup>52</sup> NA T175, roll 5, frames 2505229 to 2505231, 20<sup>th</sup> December 1940, Kdo WE(2) Nr. 275/40.

<sup>53</sup> NA T175, roll 5, *ibid*, 21.11.1941, II/2086.

follows: generals 4; colonels (Obersts) 4; lieutenant colonels (Oberstleutnants) 4; majors 24; captains (Hauptleute) 46; senior lieutenants (Oberleutnants) 150; and, lieutenants (Leutnants) 130, a total of 362 and 21,000 constables.<sup>54</sup> Between 1934 and 1938 the police grew in size from 78,307 to 99,812 men. The allied intelligence forces studied the question of the numbers of SS in the Order Police in June 1945, they concluded that the SS had been added to the police.<sup>55</sup> From a further list of 224 members of 2<sup>nd</sup> company of the Frankfurt SS-Sturm only eight became members of the police forces and of those six joined the Gestapo.<sup>56</sup> The reorganisation of the uniformed police was largely completed, with the Ordnungspolizei being the official institution with branches that included the gendarmerie and Wasserschutzpolizei (water-borne police).<sup>57</sup>

## V. The Formation of the Staatsschutzkorps

By 1938 the role of the SS within the SS-Police establishment was as far as Hitler was concerned, completed. In secret directive issued in August 1938, Hitler fused the functions of the SS and police:

I have created the basis for the unification and reorganisation of the German police. With this step, the Schutzstaffeln of the NSDAP which were under the Reichsführer-SS and Chief of the German police even up to now, have entered into close connection with the duties of the German police.<sup>58</sup>

Robert Koehl<sup>59</sup> and Bernd Wegner<sup>60</sup> have separately investigated what kind of force the SS actually was. Through his vast research Koehl took up the theme of the SS as the political soldiers of the NSDAP. This was not a sudden departure as it was long since realised that the SS was a politically motivated militaristic organisation. Some authors had referred to the SS as asphalt soldiers, a derisory term first used by the Wehrmacht. Within the realms of political and military academia there is little interpretation of

<sup>54</sup> NA, T580, roll 216, frame 0920.

<sup>55</sup> SHAEF, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, Counter-Intelligence sub division, Evaluation and Dissemination Section Report No.30, SS in Orpo, 16<sup>th</sup> June 1945, declassified reference NND891108, November 1999.

<sup>56</sup> US Army declassified IRR File NND853130, 'SS personalities', Frankfurt am Main, report made 7<sup>th</sup> August 1946.

<sup>57</sup> NA, BDC Roll A3345-OS-5045, frames 2634 to 2680, Vortrag über Die Deutsche Ordnungspolizei, from Bdo Hamburg Generalmajor der Polizei Querner. A presentation document for the Police Governor of Madrid on a visit to Germany on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1940

<sup>58</sup> IWM, IMT, 647-PS, Führer directive, 17<sup>th</sup> August 1938.

<sup>59</sup> Koehl, 1983.

<sup>60</sup> Bernd Wegner, *The Waffen SS; Organisation, Ideology and Function*, (London, 1990).



Hitler's concept of the political soldier.<sup>61</sup> The study of militarism since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century has, to a considerable extent, been influenced by Clausewitzian concepts of war as an extension of statecraft (nationalistic politics and nationalistic armies). The armies of the French Revolution and the Soviet Red Army both existed beyond revolution and indirectly exported their politics but it would be wrong to label them political soldiers; rather they were politicised national armies. In searching for the origins of the SS as political soldiers, Robert Koehl identified the influence of 'soldierly nationalism'.<sup>62</sup> These ideas had flourished amongst the men of the armed forces who returned to Germany at the end of the First World War. These men, he argued, had not belonged to the traditional elite of Prusso-German militarism, but had fought in the frontline as volunteers or conscripts; were ambivalent toward post-war civilian society. In the chaos of the immediate post war years of civil disorder these veterans joined local units known as Freikorps and the 'Black Reichswehr' that were mustered on a strict but paramilitary code; and, conducted armed brutal conflict against similarly organised Socialist or would be revolutionaries.

Robert Koehl tried to promote the view that the SS had plans of becoming eventually the Staatsschutzkorps (armed state force), in line with Hitler's decrees on the SS. Some of Koehl's findings had originated from his earlier work on the SS resettlement programme and to a certain extent were influenced by the political-racial issue rather than the police-military standpoint.<sup>63</sup> With the onset of war Hitler was pressurised to define the future role of the SS for the benefit of the German army, which feared the emergence of a new threat to its status. According to Koehl the rapid expansion of the SS suggested that Hitler wanted the SS to become a Staatsschutzkorps to 'kill and torture.' The differences between Wegner and Koehl centre on two important documents issued by Hitler. The rapidly changing situation in foreign affairs between 1938 and 1941, forced Hitler to regulate the SS. In a Decree of 17 August 1938, written to clarify the relationship with the army, Hitler made a statement as to the meaning of the SS. The key sections stated:

(I.1) Being a political organisation of the NSDAP, the SS as such does not

<sup>61</sup> Alfred Vagts, *A History of Militarism: Civilian and Military*, (1967); Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier*, (New York, 1971); C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite*, (New York, 1959).

<sup>62</sup> Koehl, 1983.

<sup>63</sup> Robert Koehl, *RKFDV: German Resettlement and Population Policy 1939-1945*, (Wisconsin, 1957).

need any military set-up and training for its political obligations. It carries no weapons.

(I.2) For special inner-political tasks for the Reichsführer-SS and Chief of Police, tasks which I might have to assign him from time to time.... (In the event of mobilisation there was a list of units added that would come under Wehrmacht command).

(II.1) The SS-Verfügungstruppe is neither part of the Wehrmacht nor part of the police. It is a standing armed unit, exclusively at my disposal. As such, and as a unit of the NSDAP its members are to be selected by the Reichsführer-SS according to the ideological and political standards, which I have ordered for the NSDAP and for the Schutzstaffeln.<sup>64</sup>

Hitler agreed the German army would continue to bear the burden of the nation at war while the SS was to focus on internal security. This SS task was left suitably vague, however, there was an underlying paranoia within Nazi circles of the threat from within; a legacy from the civil strife at the end of the First World War. Hitler also reserved for himself the right to use the future Waffen-SS for undefined duties. This was typical of the confusion that Hitler could cause even with attempts at rationalisation. The SS was to remain a political weapon, bound by their oath to Hitler. To elaborate the point Hitler wrote again, in a paper entitled Statement on the future Armed State Police, in August 1940. This was widely circulated by the army:

In its final form the Greater German Reich will include within its frontiers peoples who will not necessarily in all cases be well disposed towards the Reich. Outside the borders of the old Reich, therefore, it will be necessary to create an armed State police [Staatsschutzkorps] capable, whatever the situation, of representing and enforcing the authority of the Reich in the interior of the country concerned. This duty can only be carried out by a State police containing within its ranks men of the best German blood and identified unquestioningly with the ideology upon which the Greater German Reich is founded. Only a formation constituted on these lines will be able to resist subversive influences in times of crisis . . . The Waffen-SS formations will return home having proved themselves in the field and so will have the authority required to carry out their duties as State police. Such use of the Waffen-SS at home is in the interests of the Wehrmacht itself. Never again must the German Wehrmacht, now based on universal military service, be required to use its weapons against its own fellow-countrymen in times of internal crisis. Any such step is the beginning of the end. A State that has to resort to these methods is no longer in a position to use its armed forces against an external enemy and is therefore surrendering. There are tragic examples of this in our own history. In future the Wehrmacht is

<sup>64</sup> IWM, IMT, 647-PS; see also in Krausnick et al, 1968, pp 262-263.

solely and only to be used against the Reich's external enemies.<sup>65</sup>

Bernd Wegner has challenged Koehl's concept of the SS as an imperfect model. Wegner has made an important study into the Waffen-SS during its peacetime development; and his research led him to conclude that they did pose a serious challenge to the Wehrmacht. They did not represent just another army but an alternative National Socialist military system.<sup>66</sup> Wegner, looking at the reasoning behind the formation of the Waffen-SS, felt Himmler would not allow the Wehrmacht to have all the laurels from the coming war ensuring a role for the SS. In Wegner's view the concept of the Staatsschutzkorps was just a tactical stage in the process to the development of the SS as an alternative NS armed force. This would have led to the eventual replacement of the Wehrmacht by the SS, as the NS army. The main body of Wegner's ideas appear tangible but there is a reasonably strong 'as if' quality to his conclusion of an NS military. Wegner's thesis suffered like Koehl from a weakness in research of the wartime SS. He saw in the 17<sup>th</sup> August 1938, decree Hitler grant the SS the autonomous military role that the army had feared since its problems with the SA. He went on to suggest that the nature of NS theories and policies required a radical political soldiery outside the traditional military and police forces. Tradition or the limits of state laws would not hinder such a force. Wegner believed that the research into the SS required a broader interpretation of policy intentions, including a realisation of Himmler's lack of concern for the existence of the state. His power derived from Hitler and the SS was an executive weapon to be wielded outside the parameters of the state, '[The SS was]...merely the sword to which is entrusted the carrying out of the decisions taken by the competent organs, in the same way the executive agents of the State are not to concern themselves with politics.'<sup>67</sup>

## **VI. The Influence of Hermann Göring**

Once in power, in which he enjoyed a substantial share until almost the end of the war, Göring was active in consolidating Nazi authority and then in hastening the creation of a Nazi empire through military pressure and war. His historical importance derives much more from his role in the economy and in pursuing grand strategy than from any intrinsic personal claim to significance. The 'Iron Man' divorced from his political empire and the

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<sup>65</sup> IWM, IMT, D-665, see also Krausnick, et al, 1968, pp 264-265.

<sup>66</sup> Wegner, 1990.

<sup>67</sup> Table Talk, p388.

apparatus of Nazism was an historical creature of little substance.<sup>68</sup>

Hermann Göring, the deputy Führer and Luftwaffe Reichsmarschall, built an empire across a broad range of economic, military and social institutions. His personal involvement at significant moments in the history of the regime reflected this power base; the political trial following the Reichstag fire; the conspiratorial 'night of the long knives'; the 'creator' of the Nazi economic miracle; the intrigue of the Blomberg-Fritsch crisis; the manipulation of Czechoslovakia; the genocide of the Jews; the failure born out of boastfulness over Stalingrad; and, the plundering of European art treasures to name but a few. His character was complicated, as Sir Neville Henderson discovered:

[On Göring's control of the Luftwaffe, the Four Year Plan, the Reichsforstamt] It was a curious combination for an air force leader, but those who worked with him commented on his great ability to study files of documents and rows of figures and to extract out of them everything, which was essential.<sup>69</sup>

It was also Hermann Göring who first used the phrase 'final solution' of the Jews in May 1941, and<sup>70</sup> he ordered Reinhard Heydrich (31<sup>st</sup> July 1941) to undertake the planning for the 'final solution' of the Jews. The priority for the first removal of Jews was the Reich and Czechoslovakia:

Göring served in effect mainly as an administrative conduit. It was he who authorized the involvement of the state apparatus in the Final Solution and legitimised it as a state undertaking.<sup>71</sup>

Later during the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal, as the leading National Socialist he proved to be a formidable defendant and almost single-handedly undermined the American prosecution.

After 1936, the question of policing was not solely left in the domain of the SS. Referring to the period 1933-36 Göring took the position Prime Minister of Prussia, taking with it control of the Prussian State police. He not only increased his own powers but also those of the Gestapo and the Landespolizei. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1933, the Polizeiabteilung 'Wecke' was created to deal with the arrest of Communists, Socialists

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<sup>68</sup> Richard J. Overy, *Goering: The 'Iron Man'*, (London, 1984), p 21.

<sup>69</sup> Sir Neville Henderson, *Failure of a Mission: Berlin 1937-1939*, (London, 1940), p87.

<sup>70</sup> Martin Gilbert, *The Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy*, (London, 1986), p152.

<sup>71</sup> Dawidowicz, 1975, p169.

and opponents to the regime. It imprisoned its victims in the first concentration camps such as Columbia House in Berlin. Göring was therefore in a peculiarly powerful position, which he exploited during the 'night of the long knives'; working alongside Heinrich Himmler. Interestingly, two of his leading police officers were Generalleutnant der Landespolizei Kurt Daluge and Artur Nebe, a senior Kriminalpolizei officer-later a leading SD Einsatzgruppen commander. During the early days of the regime Göring maintained the police and SA terror reinforcing the NS regime and his power base.<sup>72</sup> When the SS centralised all the police forces of Germany, Adolf Hitler formally passed Polizeiabteilung 'Wecke' to Göring's personal command. He became one of the first NS leaders to have a regiment named after him when it was renamed Landespolizei Regiment 'Hermann Göring'. It was eventually to become the Herman Göring Panzer Division and later still the strangely sounding parachute armoured corps (Fallschirmjäger-Panzerkorps) Herman Göring.

### The Luftwaffe

The SS is normally regarded as the archetypal Nazi organisation of all the armed forces of Nazi Germany. The SS and Luftwaffe were not the competing organisations from opposite ends of some abstract social and political measure that some veteran pilots liked to maintain after the end of the war.<sup>73</sup> They were both distinctly National Socialist organizations that also achieved a remarkably high level of co-operation with each other. The SS were associated with Nordic mythologies, the occult and the mysteries of German blood; the Luftwaffe on the other hand represented the future, youth and technology. The Luftwaffe symbolised both the new science of aviation and the epitome of German military power. The Luftwaffe experienced three stages of development between 1933, and 1945. The first began with its creation and ended in 1939 following its leadership of the successful Legion Condor operations during the Spanish Civil War. The second stage followed the outbreak of war and led up to the failure to re-supply Stalingrad. The final stage followed from Stalingrad to the collapse in 1945. During this time the Luftwaffe was more than just the aerial warfare component of the Nazi war machine.

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<sup>72</sup> Overy, 1948, p26.

<sup>73</sup> The following represent a small sample: Hans-Ulrich Rudel, *Trotzdem*, (Oldendorf, 1981); Raymond F. Tolver and Trevor J. Constable, *The Blond Knight of Germany*, (Pa, 1985); Adolf Galland, *Die Ersten und die Letzten Jagdflieger im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, (München, 1953).

The origins of the Luftwaffe lay in the links with the army, having been formed from its ranks during the First World War, and later becoming the secret air force. In 1934, the Reichsluftfahrtministerium (RLM), was created by Hermann Göring to control a host of National Socialist flying organisations. Later, in complete defiance of the Treaty of Versailles, the Luftwaffe was formed. Gradually the Luftwaffe expanded its functions beyond its air force element. The expansion of the ground troops of the Luftwaffe finally culminated in two Panzer Divisions, ten Fallschirmjäger (parachute) Divisions, twenty-two Field Divisions (infantry) and twenty-two Flak Divisions. There were also a large number of 'special' units including five Ski-Jägerkommandos, over twenty Landesschützen (regional defence) battalions, ten security 'Sonderkommando' battalions, large numbers of independent signals companies, flak formations and construction battalions. The intelligence gathering units had been originally formed from listening to opposition parties and were to become an integral part of the Luftwaffe signals structure. The Luftwaffe command structure and Göring's more important generals were men he had relied upon from his own wartime flying days. Ernst Udet, who was blamed by both Hitler and Göring for the collapse of the Luftwaffe, brought a high degree of personal flying skills and past military reputation. However it has been often overlooked that many of the Luftwaffe's generals had other skills such as policing, business and political administration. As many as 30% of Luftwaffe Generals had become police officers under Weimar, this built an unusual pedigree into the Luftwaffe.

#### The Mobilisation of the Reichsforstamt

From 1938 Goering was more concerned with mobilisation and available manpower. Goering instructed Chief of the Ordnungspolizei Daluge to set up a national register to classify all workers and industry. Hitler prevented Goering from including women.<sup>74</sup>

One often-overlooked responsibility of Göring's was his status as the Reichsjägermeister (Master of the German Hunt). In 1934, he became the Reichsforstmeister (Master of the German Forests). Historians have generally interpreted this aspect of Göring's life as a harmless folly. It is known that many Nazi leaders including Heinrich Himmler, Kurt Daluge and Kurt von Gottberg were known

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<sup>74</sup> Overy, 1984, p84.

to be keen participants in hunting.<sup>75</sup> Through the control of the forests Göring could actually stretch his power beyond normal national boundaries. This provided him with an idealistic power base, the mix between völkischer Nazi-Ideologie (a folklore ideology) and rural culture. The power and the mystery of the forest were at the very heart of NS cultural mythology especially espoused by Himmler. Thus his political authority combined an image of modern aircraft technology, with war and the guardianship of the home of Germanic culture, the primeval forest. In this way Goring was at the very heart of the social-cultural-propaganda of the regime.

Göring was given his first firearm by Ritter von Epenstein, his mother's lover.<sup>76</sup> He was taught how to hunt and came to be an expert. When later he formed his own hunts close family friends and associates would participate including people who had known his father when governor of Southwest Africa. One such influential and regular participant was the guerrilla General Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck (1870-1964 – refer to *Dramatis Personae*). Gradually he turned his hobby into a profession and began to formulate his ideas over the regulation of both game and the forests. In 1934 he ensured the control of hunting by making it compulsory for gun owners to pass a test for a license. These regulations are still in force today. His rules for hunting included never killing more animals than strictly necessary. The kill had to be quick, minimising the quarry's agony. His controls included banning hunting from horseback or vehicles, night-lights, metal traps, wire, poisons or chemical, and introduced penalties especially for poaching. The hunter had always to be accompanied with a trained dog to ensure wounded game was found and dispatched. He also applied his talents to what we today would call the eco-system and practised advanced methods of conservation. In particular he restocked the forests of Schörfheide and the Rominten Heide. Göring also introduced the idea of green areas in or around cities and gradually Germany became one of the world's leading conservationists. Eventually through his office of Prime Minister of Prussia, he was able to take land on the Schörfheide and build the villa that came to be called Carinhall.

Carinhall and Rominten contrasted the two passions of Göring's fantasy with treasures, wildlife, nature and leisure. Carinhall was located in the heart of the

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<sup>75</sup> NA, T175, roll 83, folder 0276, Göring's invitation a hunt to Himmler in 1939.

<sup>76</sup> Leonard Mosley, *The Reich Marshal*, (London 1974), pp222-223.

Schörfheide, prime heath land north east of Berlin. The buildings that made up Carinhall were styled into a mixture of hunting lodges, Nazi architecture and copies of Frederick the Great's palaces. Secured by units from the Hermann Göring Police regiment, it also had bunkers and anti-aircraft defences. Like Himmler, Göring surrounded himself with adjutants based in Carinhall to provide an example of how strong he regarded the relationship between the Luftwaffe and the Reichsforstamt.<sup>77</sup> It was the memorial site to Göring's first wife Carin (she died in 1931) who was re-interred in the site's mausoleum in a ceremony attended by Hitler. More importantly it became the place for the projection of Göring's style of power politics contrasting heavily with the mythological expression imposed upon the castle of Wewelsburg by Himmler. During the 1930s, Carinhall and Rominten were used for politicking and diplomacy with foreign visitors including the British diplomat Sir Neville Henderson. Many fell into the trap of its idyllic surroundings.

Rominten Heide in East Prussia, on the other hand, was a fully functioning, no-nonsense hunting lodge. The men of the Reichsforstamt brought all their management skills to bear on the place, perhaps because it had been the Prussian Kaiser's hunting lodge (including Frederick the Great and Kaiser Wilhelm II). It was here that Göring really hunted. Of one such occasion Sir Neville Henderson was to write:

Rominten was my first experience of that hospitality. The house itself was a simple shooting-box with a thatched roof, but fitted internally with every comfort. As far as I am aware, the household consisted solely of maids, with one manservant, and there was no ceremony of any kind. One of his Swedish brothers-in-law, Count Rosen, was the only other guest, and the rest of the party consisted of Oberstjägermeister Scherping, Oberstjägermeister Menthe, and a young air officer A.D.C., von Brauschitz [sic. misspelled von Brauchitsch], a son of the present German commander-in chief.<sup>78</sup>

Rominten was also a place where business could be done, and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1942 Himmler visited Göring there for several days. It was no doubt for the purposes of hunting, but as will be seen in chapter ten it was a highly coincidental meeting to the developments in the theatre of Bandenbekämpfung. Incidentally, Rominten was not far from Białowieża and during the 1930s Göring and Daluge were known to have visited

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<sup>77</sup> Volker Knopf, Stefan Martens, *Gorings Reich: Selbstinszenierungen in Carinhall*, (Berlin 1999), p71, a document written in 1935 listing the adjutants posted to Carinhall.

<sup>78</sup> Henderson, 1940, p89.

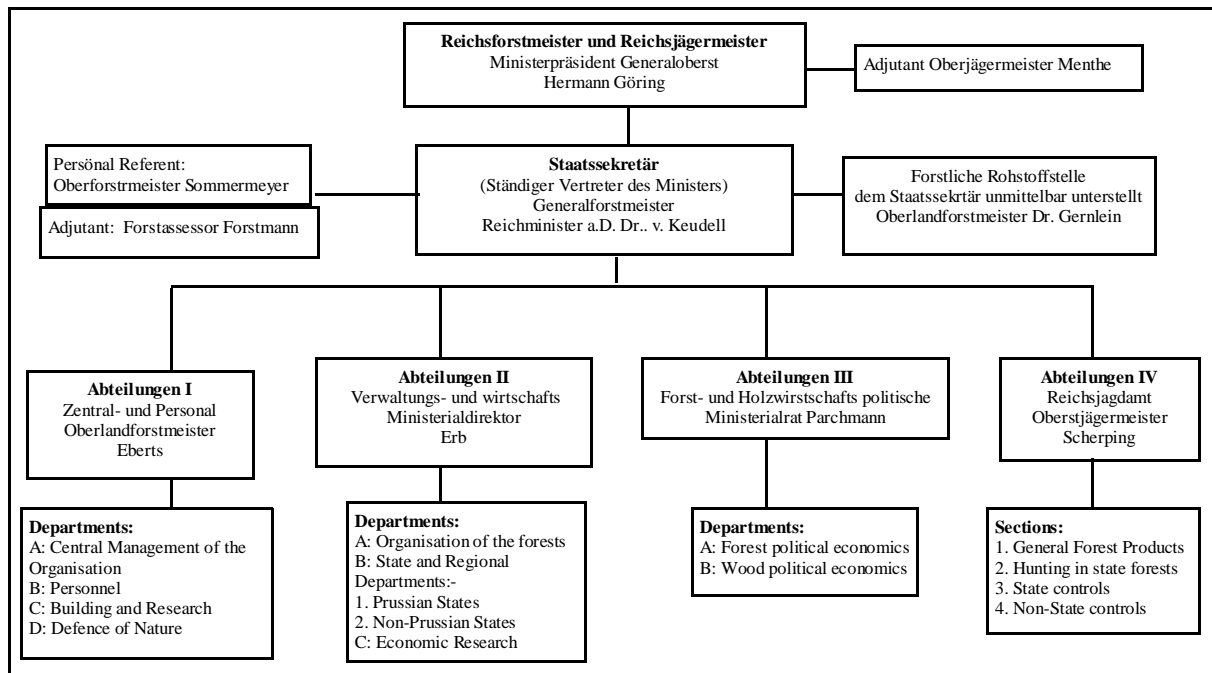


the forests there to conduct some hunting. During the war it was a place of rest and recuperation, especially for Luftwaffe aces and new Knight's Cross recipients. In such an environment it would be difficult not to believe Göring developed a cocktail of fantasy and reality in the midst of his planning, decision-making and ultimately scheming.

The Reichsforstamt between 1934 and 1945 was fully absorbed into the National Socialist regime under Göring's control. The organisational structure Diagram 4 at the back provides a strong indication of how Göring ran this aspect of his empire. Clearly, from the diagram of the Reichsforstamt, Göring was more than a figurehead employing subordinates, this was a central office in his overall power base. In this sense he appears to have been bolted to the head of the structure; but that would be to misunderstand his personal and professional interests. Before the Nazis coming to power forestry, game and timber industries were politically managed through the Länder or the local individual state authorities. In 1934 these services became centralised under the Reichsforstamt. The diagrams of the Reichsforstamt project a large nation-wide organisation that was predominately Prussian in its influence. It was able to absorb new conquests like the Austrian forests following the Austrian 'Anschluss' (added to the mobilisation plans of 1938).<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> BA MA, RW 19/936, files show that in the case of war the Reichsforstamt would be mobilised. Document 1, Wehrwirtschaftstab, Mobilisation Kalender (Berlin 26<sup>th</sup> April 1939).

**Diagram 4: Structure of the Reichsforstamt (1936)**

In 1934 through his status as Reichsjägermeister Göring set in motion the plans for the mobilisation of the Reichsforstbeamte (State Forestry Department employees). The mobilisation process in Germany began with the preparation of a mobilisation calendar. This provided the written instructions for mobilisation including the responsible service or arm (in the case of the Reichsforstamt, the Luftwaffe). The process for the mobilisation of the Reichsforstamt began in 1936 at that time a source of over 870,000 men. Although by 1944 its manpower levels had fallen it could be called upon to supply conscripts as seen in the Wehrmacht reserve assessment for 1945.<sup>80</sup> The Reichsforstamt manpower was highly qualified and professional in its number and type of trades. Its functions were to maintain the forests and ensure they continued a productive source of industry including paper, food and leisure. The men that patrolled the forests for poachers were practised hunters of both men and beasts. The technocrats within the organisation were highly qualified in geography, geology, zoology, chemistry, biology etc. They were concerned with conservation from both the local economic and political standpoints. At the regional and national levels the senior civil servants were concerned with setting policy for forestry on behalf of the NS leadership. The Reichsforstamt provided a wider supporting role to the German army in its

<sup>80</sup> NA, T77, roll 780, frames 5506284 to 5506484 Wehrmacht Ersatzplan 1945, section 62, Reichsforstamt.

economic warfare programme.<sup>81</sup> Many foresters were employed by the army to help exploit the Russian forests.

## **VII. The Protégés**

During the 1930s the leaders of the SS, Luftwaffe and Police encouraged outstanding subordinates to develop. These protégés were encouraged to take their own lead in dealing with issues or taking what they wanted. For Krausnick and his colleagues it was the manifestation of National Socialist social Darwinism and the realisation of the Führerprinzip. Several men came to the fore. Reinhard Heydrich was probably the most well known, but others included Karl Wolff who remained Himmler's personal advisor until given responsibility for SS activities in Northern Italy in 1943. Himmler's style of management was to encourage through small circles of dedicated individuals or specialists. Göring's way was to rely on old comrades from the First World War, such as Ernst Udet and Erhard Milch, and experts. Amongst them he would place younger candidates to do most of the hard work. Daluge, so much as it is possible to establish, was a team and group builder. Annually he would present a report on the workings of the Ordnungspolizei. He was also loyal toward his subordinates in the same way as Göring, forging close relationships like that with Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, than Himmler would ever allow. The similarity between Göring and Daluge in their methods almost certainly stemmed from their First World War experience. In this respect, there is a distinct difference in the comradeship expounded by the Nazi ideologues without prior war experience and the veterans.

Between Himmler and Kurt Daluge the most influential protégé was Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski. In 1935 Himmler became godfather to one of Bach-Zelewski's sons (Patenkind).<sup>82</sup> The lists of Himmler's informal position as a national godfather raise issues about the power-relationship between the masses and the Nazi leadership. The relationship between Daluge and Bach-Zelewski developed from before Hitler's takeover of power in 1933. They probably met through the Black Reichswehr, as both were members and stationed in the same area of Frankfurt on the Oder and Berlin. Throughout the 1930s Daluge monitored Bach-Zelewski's progress. The personnel

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<sup>81</sup> BA MA, PH30, I/245, PH30II PH30 II/ 6, Kaiserliches Generalgouvernement Warschau. During the First World War the Warsaw Etappen employed large numbers of foresters.

<sup>82</sup> NA, SS Personnel file, Bach-Zelewski document numbered 26335, Himmler's list of birthday presents included toys, ice cream and a dog, stretched from 1935 to 1944.

files provide the evidence of as close a relationship one might find in the SS-Police. In a personnel report for the commander SS area (Abschnittsführer) XII, poignant remarks were written about Bach-Zelewski by the administering officer Kurt Daluege, 'True and honest, starkly impulsive, in many cases unrestrained, uncontrolled (hemmungslos). Promotion is recommended if he controls his impulsiveness.'<sup>83</sup> Bach-Zelewski's promotions continued, the relationship between the two remained firm as later correspondence will confirm.

In Erhard Milch, Göring had the perfect military administrator. He overcame the weaknesses of Udet and continued in the leading position in the Luftwaffe to the end of the war. In the Reichsforstamt Göring relied upon Ulrich Scherping. He came from Pommerania, where he was born in 1889. Scherping had served in the First World War, beginning as a Lieutenant (he had become a cadet in 1910) and ending the war as general staff officer of an infantry division. He was a member of the Rossbach Freikorps and fought in the border war against Poland. Between 1919 and 1933 he pursued a career in the hunting and forestry becoming the executive of the Deutschen Jagdkammer (German Hunting Association). He joined Göring in the Prussian Ministry system, joining the Nazi Party in May 1933. The following year he became a member of the SS, eventually rising to the rank of SS-Brigadeführer.<sup>84</sup> Under Scherping, there was another protégé Walter Frevert, born in Hamm in 1897. Frevert had served in the Great War following which he studied as a forester. In 1938 he became the Forest-inspector for Rominten Heide and joined the army. As will be seen in chapter ten, he became the commander of a Luftwaffe security command.

### VIII. Summary

The maintenance of a dictatorship... largely depends on rational methods, on ruthless and economic calculation of means and instruments. It is primarily a question of efficient organization from above. A subtle, invisible and widespread net is needed running parallel with the general policy of the State, challenging and unmasking the "Enemies of the State", both at home and abroad.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> NA, SS personnel file, Bach-Zelewski, report from Daluege, 16<sup>th</sup> March 1933, 'treu and ehrlich, stark impulsiv, in vielen Fällen hemmungslos. The word hemmungslos could also mean wild and unscrupulous, which however much it would seem appropriate, was perhaps too strong in this context.

<sup>84</sup> Gautschi, 1999, p 44.

<sup>85</sup> Bramstedt, 1945, p12.

The question of the Freikorps and its impact in the process of the development in German security policy still remains undecided. Why were veterans, who until just a few months before threatened the whole cohesion of allied strategy in the last German offensive of the First World War, turned against each other in the name of revolution and counter revolution? The historiography has generally pointed toward right extremism and its attack upon the collective left-wing labor movement. However, there has been little consideration for the role of the Army between 1914-18 in transforming German men both militarily, but also politically. In parallel to this was the impact of total war upon German men having been mobilised and prepared for war. This was followed by the consequences of the process of brutalisation, over a period of four years, of maltreating civilians and non-combatants in Belgium, France and Eastern Europe. The failure to achieve final victory magnified the invisible lesions that this process was causing. Men institutionalized into the routines of total war harboured psychological complexes beyond the capability of experts and their governments to both cope with or even repair. Perhaps it was a surprising consequence that the scale of violence in the homeland was not greater. The formation of the Freikorps, the Schwarze Korps and later the SS were not just places for brutal right-wing activists to collect; they represented the only structure of formal understanding for the men transformed by war, defeat and despair. The problem later was that these men and associations were allowed the opportunity to vent their frustrations.

Richard Overy has written of the inter-relationship between Göring and Himmler. According to Overy they needed each other's organisational support to prop and exploit their personal ambitions. Close examination of the record suggests that there was a yet more complex relationship between them. In one sense Göring dominated their relationship while Himmler remained extremely deferential, biding his time. They both followed different paths in building their political power bases.<sup>86</sup> From the moment Himmler took command of the SS, he began to erect an intricate and functional national security organism, in keeping with his skills of administrative control, utilising it as a means to further exploiting his influence of the Nazi regime. Göring on the other hand, took control of whatever came his way; an opportunist who hoarded of power and

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<sup>86</sup> NA, T175 roll 42, from frame 1, Reichforstamt, and folder 106, application of Generalleutnant Ramcke to have a farm in the occupied east. roll 62, folder 24, Himmler's power over the Luftwaffe roll 65, folder 21, Luftpolizeiflugzeuge transferred to the SS, roll 67, folder 52, field brigades of the Luftwaffe.

authority. These men also reflected the different leadership styles prevalent in Nazi Germany, charismatic but chaotic in the case of Göring, measured and methodical the preferred approach of Himmler. They combined their mutual interests at convenient moments, such as the 'night of the long knives', and in doing so they increased their respective power bases. The relationship between the SS and the Luftwaffe has always been regarded as somewhat hostile. Yet the co-operation between the two was considerable, especially during the war.<sup>87</sup>

From an organisational standpoint we observe two dynamics of Nazi security policy. The first, included technocratic functions of management, communications, intelligence and leadership. The second, saw the harmonisation of ideology, with the Nazi interpretation of state policy, and dogma. The 'trust' or confidence within the management structures had already been established by 1939, as in the case of both Himmler's and Göring's organisations. The 'management teams', in the case of the SS, had been erected and tested since 1929. They largely remained in place until 1943. Kurt Daluge understood the problem of organisation. His military experience had taught him to bond a group of men that he personally could rely upon. He led by example, relying on his knowledge of the capability within the men under his command. Daluge combined training with ideological education, he merged the ways of the military with Nazi doctrine. This military style paternalism was a major factor in why the police performed effectively in the genocide of the Jews. At the heart of this lay Daluge's influence which was considerable. He should be remembered for not only being Himmler's most influential lieutenant, but for turning an essentially non-Nazi organisation into the practitioners of genocide, in less than five years.

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<sup>87</sup> NA, T175, role 50, frame 17254577. The correspondence between Generalleutnant Ramcke (senior parachute forces commander) and Himmler suggests there was again a more complex relationship between these two Nazi organisations. Ramcke had requested lands in the east in the colonisation process. He explained in his letter that he had come from a family of farmers in Schleswig-Holstein and had a large family of six children. In a phrase that expressed Blood and Soil (Blut und Boden) National Socialism, Ramcke unashamedly requested new lands (die Scholle) in the east. It was in this case a form of queue jumping. Himmler responded by replying that confirmation, as he had already said, Ramcke would get his wish, further stating, 'I could use you and your boys in the settlement.' However, Himmler suggested all would have to wait until peacetime

### **Chapter Three: Genocide and Security 1939-1941**

Once more I will assume the part of a prophet: If the international Jewish financiers within and without Europe, succeeded in plunging the nations once more into a world war, then the result will be not the Bolshevisation of the world and thereby the victory of Jewry but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe<sup>1</sup>

The attempts by the Nazis to reconcile the increasing problems of security as a consequence of tactical success and strategic failure were consistent throughout the war. The spectrum of success and failure undermined the Nazis ability to make rational decisions. Once they had reached the limit of the ladder of escalation of terror, the Nazis were left with only the possibility of killing or deporting ever larger numbers. In this sense they had become victims of their own brutality. Failure in the management of the ever increasing shortages in manpower was not helped by the policy of terror. While small numbers of Germans could control effectively control larger populations of Soviet peasants, the real problem lay in the growing number of insurgents that stretched their ability to respond. The answer lay in the employment of collaborators and non-Germans within the SS-Police establishment. Simply put, as the army gained more territory there were fewer police forces available for adequate policing. The Nazis were tied by both their inability to compromise on race and to climb down over their harsh methods.

Isolating the security mission, the command, control and communication structures, the troop formations, of the SS-Police establishment during the invasion of Soviet Russia, highlights the organisational dynamics behind Nazi security policy prior to the changes of 1942. It was during this period that the army relinquished responsibility for its own rear area security. Thus, we begin to observe the shift from localised security to that of a centralised structure. This in turn saw the gradually transformation of the SS-Police establishment into a national security force, a police force for occupation. It is readily noticeable from the archival records, how the Germans tried and tested ideas through the experience of operational conditions. This in itself pinpointed the end of German military security policy and the rise of a Nazi concept of security. The implementation of genocide or widespread ethnic cleansing not only provided the emphasis of this Nazi security policy, but it also placed the emphasis of large scale killing upon the rear area troops. It was achieved through instilling

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<sup>1</sup> Adolf Hitler, NA, IMT, 2663-PS, Völkischer Beobachter, Munich, 1<sup>st</sup> February 1939, p367.

obedience by complicity, and extended the mantle of security duties beyond the local management of the army's rear area.

## **I. The Security Mission**

The Tribunal is fully satisfied by the evidence that the war initiated by Germany against Poland on 1st September, 1939, was most plainly an aggressive war, which was to develop in due course into a war which embraced almost the whole world, and resulted in the commission of countless crimes, both against the laws and customs of war, and against humanity.<sup>2</sup>

Yugoslavia, Poland, France, Norway, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Russia, Greece, Albania, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Denmark, Holland, Belgium and the United Kingdom Channel Isles all experienced distinctive forms and intensities of German occupation security policy.<sup>3</sup> In Eastern Europe occupation measures were initiated as a far-reaching programme of pacification through social engineering, ethnic cleansing and genocide. This first phase of security was ideologically pure National Socialism with only a modicum of the sophistication in techniques that would become common to *Bandenbekämpfung*. The process of development began with the Polish experience. For the Nazis, Poland represented the accumulation of all the territorial impositions since 1918, the bastard state of the Treaty of Versailles and an object for national revenge. The rapid defeat of Poland only heightened its genetic weaknesses in the eyes of the Nazis as they mounted a harsh six-year occupation.<sup>4</sup> Conquest and annexation by the extension of adjoining lands into Polish territory was the main war aim. Immediately upon the conclusion of the Polish campaign a civilian general-government administration was declared. As Hitler said to Keitel, 'The armed forces should welcome the opportunity of avoiding having to deal with administrative questions in Poland. On principle there cannot be two administrations.'<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> HMSO, misc.12, *Judgement of the International Military Tribunal for the Trial of German Major War Criminals, Nuremberg*, 30 September and 1<sup>st</sup> October 1946, p27.

<sup>3</sup> Guus Meershoek, Jean Solchany, Ahlrich Meyer, Gerhard Schreiber, Eberhard Rondholz, *Repression und Kriegsverbrechen, Die Bekämpfung von Widerstand und Partisanenbewegungen gegen die deutsche Besatzung in West- und Südeuropa*, (Berlin, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> Czesław Madajczyk, *Die Okkupationspolitik Nazideutschlands in Polen 1939-1945*, (Stuttgart, 1988).

<sup>5</sup> N & P, volume 3, chapter 35, 17<sup>th</sup> October 1939, p928.



The practice of killing began at the start of the invasion by German soldiers in what has been described as a 'Destructive Impulse'.<sup>6</sup> The German army's occupation commander was General Johannes Blaskowitz, who had set up his headquarters in a hunting lodge, outside the city of Lodz. In February 1940 Blaskowitz put together a report on the behaviour of senior SS and police officers in Poland. In the report Blaskowitz stated that the killing of 10,000 Jews and Poles was 'misguided'. He made a very telling point which lay at the heart of German attitudes, 'Very soon we will reach a point where our archenemies in the Eastern Territories – the Pole and the Jew with the backing of the Catholic Church – will be united in their hatred against their German torturers.'<sup>7</sup> Less well known is that this report formed part of an investigation into Blaskowitz following his capture by the Americans. The American interrogator made the following observation:

Source [Blaskowitz] had ordered his troops to maintain order in the areas occupied by the army, but he believed it was the responsibility of the General Government to maintain order in the remaining Polish areas, which they controlled. There were still a good many armed Poles roaming around in bands, and source took care of this threat when such armed bands endangered the garrisons and troops, but only then. Beyond that he tried to keep his troops strictly segregated from the Poles, since contacts with the Poles only caused trouble and increased the distrust... A good many German deserters turned up gradually as things settled down and numerous death sentences were meted out to these. Source had to re-establish military discipline, as such deserters, combined with Polish riffraff might easily have become a real danger.<sup>8</sup>

The Blaskowitz report of 1939 was really only concerned with military efficiency and security. Later, under interrogation he suggested that one of his soldiers had participated in the SS actions and was allegedly court-martialled (although he could not name the soldier in question). At the time of his interrogation, the memory of his report was not the subject that it has become today. He used it to complain about and distance himself from the SS and the police. Thus all that the original report signified to Blaskowitz was

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<sup>6</sup> Alexander Rossino, 'Destructive Impulses: German Soldiers and the Conquest of Poland', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, VII N3, Winter 1997, pp351-65.

<sup>7</sup> Ernst Klee, Willi Dressen, and Volker Riess (ed), *The Good Old Days: The Holocaust as seen by its Perpetrators and Bystanders*, (New York, 1991), pp4-5.

<sup>8</sup> NA, T1270, roll 23, frames 0391-0394, interrogation report Generaloberst Johannes Blaskowitz, 28<sup>th</sup> July 1945. He allegedly committed suicide in 1946.

the reestablishment of his and the German army's moral standing, and reliance upon a system of security that dated back to 1870.

For Heinrich Himmler, Kurt Daluge and Reinhard Heydrich the Polish occupation represented a real opportunity to train for and rehearse their own brand of security.<sup>9</sup> It was to prove a valuable experiment in the eventual formulation of a distinctly Nazi occupation and security policy. A series of operational lessons came out of the Polish operations. SS-Obergruppenführer Friedrich-Wilhelm Krüger, a committed SS officer since 1930, became Himmler's chosen HSSPF to Hans Frank, state-director of the General-government. Krüger was a typical hard fighting veteran of the First World War, the Freikorps and a trusted SS man who played a clandestine role in the Putsch against Ernst Röhm.<sup>10</sup> From regular visits to Krüger, Daluge discovered that the former preferred the smaller Gendarmerie units rather than the larger Schutzpolizei battalions. This was because the deployment of the larger formations was limited to major conurbations to maximise their transportation and mobility. The Gendarmerie however could monitor and police the land where the partisans had become highly effective. The woods in particular were proving to be a considerable problem for the SS trying to combat partisans.<sup>11</sup> Gradually a pattern began to emerge regarding SS performance within the regime in the internal political battles over security policy, and the maximisation of their limited human resources.<sup>12</sup>

In 1940, Frank took a lead in proposing the formation of a local militia force: what was in fact a direct challenge to the authority of the triumvirate.<sup>13</sup> Polish collaborators were encouraged to join but were later forced to come under the command of the SS and Police. The lessons learned from Poland were internalised and at the time of the attack

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<sup>9</sup> Jan Tomasz Gross, *Polish Society under German Occupation: The Generalgouvernement 1939-1944*, (Princeton, 1979), p162. Banditry was as much a problem for the Germans in the occupied territories as it had been for the Polish authorities before the war. There were also large numbers of guerrillas led by Communist and non-Communist political figures who forced the SS-police forces into fully organised 'actions'. Frank later insisted at Nuremberg that he had warned Bach-Zelewski that the presence of Krüger and Globocnik in the general-gouvernement was a major reason for Poles joining the partisans. Bach-Zelewski apparently confirmed this, TVDB, pp132-133.

<sup>10</sup> Note biographical appendix.

<sup>11</sup> Gross, 1979, p162, there were bandits and armed robbers operating in the Polish occupied territories. Such were the numbers that guerrilla leaders and local police organised actions against them. See also Werner Präg & Wolfgang Jacobmeyer, *Das Diensttagebuch des deutschen Generalgouverneurs in Polen 1939-1945*, (Stuttgart, 1975).

<sup>12</sup> Leonnie M. Wheeler, L.M., 'The SS and the administration of Nazi occupied Eastern Europe, 1939-1945', D.Phil., Oxford (1981). Chapter 3.

<sup>13</sup> While all formal police forces came under the command of the SS, all Nazi leaders and organisations could raise small bodyguard or police style security units.

on Russia the SS was better prepared; as Wheeler summarised it, 'The police and SS structure which emerged to administer these duties was more sophisticated than that of its pre-war counterpart....'<sup>14</sup> In May 1940 at a flag-waving ceremony on behalf of the Waffen-SS Himmler described the work of the SS-Police in Poland:

Very frequently the member of the Waffen-SS thinks about the deportation of this people here. These thoughts came to me today when watching the very difficult work out there performed by the Security Police, supported by your men, who help them a great deal... Exactly the same thing happened in Poland in weather 40 degrees below zero, where we had to haul away thousands, tens thousands, hundred thousands; where we had to have the toughness - you should hear this but also forget it again immediately - to shoot thousands of leading Poles, where we had to have the toughness, otherwise it would have taken revenge on us later... in many cases it is much easier to go into combat with a company than to suppress an obstructive population of low cultural level in some area with a company or to carry out executions, or to haul away people, to evict crying and hysterical women, or to return our German racial brethren across the border from Russia and to take care of them... We must see to it that you consider the activity of the man in green uniform as just as valuable as the activity you yourself are engaged in. You have to consider the work of the SD man or of the man of the Security Police as a vital part of our whole work just like the fact that you can carry arms... this Waffen-SS will live only if the entire SS is alive... If the entire corps is actually an order which lives according to ... laws one part cannot exist without the other - you are unimaginable without the Allgemeine SS... The police is not imaginable without the SS, nor are we imaginable without this executive branch of the state which is in our hands... I shall form guard-battalions and put them on duty for 3 months only - to fight the inferior being (Untermenschen)... it will be the best indoctrination on inferior beings and inferior races. This activity is necessary...

1. to eliminate these negative people from the German people;
2. to exploit them once more for the great folk community by having them break stones and bake bricks so that the Fuhrer can again erect his grand buildings; to in turn invest the money, earned soberly this way, in houses, in ground, in settlements so that our men can have houses in which to raise large families and lots of children.<sup>15</sup>

Poland was also the first state to be fully exposed to National Socialist Völkische experiments, principally through the resettlement programmes under the Reichs

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p 76.

<sup>15</sup> NA, IMT, 1918-PS, Himmler's Metz Speech of 1940 to the members of the SS Adolf Hitler Bodyguard Regiment, on the presentation of their new flag.

Commission for the Strengthening of Germanism (RKFVD).<sup>16</sup> The programme involved the forcible removal of Poles from their homes and jobs, while ethnic Germans from across Europe and Russia were given their houses and jobs. The system finally fell into chaos by 1943, but not before it had contributed to the training of senior SS figures in the large-scale movement of people (what was euphemistically referred to as evacuation and resettlement).<sup>17</sup> In 1939 Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, HSSPF Südost (south-east) and Oberpräsident of Silesia, with offices in Breslau, saw the extension of his area into Southwest Poland (a coal and iron industrial area that also included the provinces of Cracow and Kielce).<sup>18</sup> On 8<sup>th</sup> November 1939 Bach-Zelewski took part in a major conference, prior to a resettlement action codenamed the 'Saybuscher Aktion'. He was one of seven HSSPF leaders who also discussed the transfer of Jews to Ghettos, the permanent removal of 'anti-socials' and the preparation of the evacuated areas for the influx of immigrant ethnic Germans. Of those attending the meeting SS-Gruppenführer Krüger, (HSSPF General-Government), SS-Gruppenführer Bruno Streckenbach (Chef der Sicherheitspolizei of the General-Government) and Ordnungspolizei General Becker, (police commander of the General Government) were later to become significant figures in the process that led to Bandenbekämpfung. Following the meeting Bach-Zelewski was responsible for the forcible removal of Poles from the Zywiec district in August 1940. Later it is known that he was part of the welcoming party for 18 trainloads of 17,500 ethnic Germans arriving from the Posen resettlement centre.<sup>19</sup>

### The Eastern Front (1941-1942)

The application of martial law aims in the first place at maintaining discipline. The fact that the operational areas in the East are so far-flung, the battle strategy which necessitates, and the peculiar qualities of the enemy, confront the courts martial with problems which, being short-staffed, they cannot solve while hostilities are in progress, and until some degree of pacification has been achieved in the conquered areas, unless jurisdiction is confined, in the first instance to its main task. This is possible only if the troops take ruthless action themselves against any threat from the enemy

<sup>16</sup> Koehl, RKFVD, and Bruno Wasser, *Himmlers Raumplanung im Osten: Der Generalplan Ost in Polen 1940-1944*, (Berlin, 1993).

<sup>17</sup> Koehl, 1983. As an HSSPF Bach-Zelewski was also responsible for the implementation of RKFVD policy.

<sup>18</sup> N&P, vol. 3, p924

<sup>19</sup> Machlejd, Wanda, *War Crimes in Poland: Erich von dem Bach*, (Warsaw, 1961), pp27-31

population.<sup>20</sup>

The instructions Adolf Hitler gave before the attack on Russia have collectively become known as the 'Barbarossa Directives'<sup>21</sup> and more widely known as the 'criminal orders'. Collectively they constituted a win-win security policy.<sup>22</sup> They were a mandate for killing but they were not new to German military traditions. Once the campaign was under way, Hitler refined his war aims and the objectives of his security policy. His war aims and the process of occupation, as recorded in the often-quoted Bormann memo of July 1941, were at one. Hitler began by attacking a Vichy French newspaper for suggesting the invasion of Russia was a European campaign. He categorically denied it was anything less than a German war with German war aims. In Holland, Denmark, France and Belgium he had not stated his aims to the world and this would remain the policy in Russia. Hitler went on to say:

Therefore we shall emphasise again that we were forced to occupy, administer, and secure a certain area; it was in the interest of the inhabitants that we provided order, food, traffic, etc., hence our measures. Nobody shall be able to recognise that it initiates a final settlement. This need not prevent our taking all necessary measures - shooting, resettling, etc. - and we shall take them.

But we do not want to make people into enemies prematurely and unnecessarily. Therefore, we shall act as though we wanted to exercise a mandate only. At the same time we must know clearly that we shall never leave those countries. Our conduct therefore, ought to be,

1. To do nothing which might obstruct the final settlement but to prepare for it in secret,
2. To emphasise that we are liberators.

On principle we have now to face the task of cutting up the giant cake according to our needs, in order to be able: first, to dominate it, second, to administer it, and third to exploit it.

The Russians have now ordered partisan warfare behind our front. This partisan war again has some advantage for us; it enables us to eradicate

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<sup>20</sup> IWM, IMT, C-50, *ibid*.

<sup>21</sup> IWM, IMT, C-50, Order concerning the exercise of martial jurisdiction and procedure in the area 'Barbarossa' and special military measures.

<sup>22</sup> There is extensive coverage of the subject in Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (ed), *Germany and the Second World War: The attack on the Soviet Union, Volume 4*, (Oxford, 1998) herein after referred to DRZW, vol.4. The leading papers of the planning for Barbarossa began at the end of December 1940: IMT 446-PS, Directive Nr.21, Operation Barbarossa, December 1940, IMT 872-PS, Conference of "Fall Barbarossa and "Sonnenblume", 3.2.1941, IMT 874-PS, diversionary preparations with Fritz Todt, 9.3.1941, IMT 873-PS, Conference with "Chief L" on the 30.4.1941, IMT 876-PS, Deception of the enemy, 12.5.1941, and, IMT C-50 and 886-PS Decree for the conduct of courts martial in the district "Barbarossa" and for special measures of the troop, 13.5.1941. In Section One of this last document, in point one civilians were removed from the courts martial process; point two stated, 'Guerrillas are to be killed ruthlessly by the troops in battle or during pursuit'; in point three any attacks by civilians were to lead to their annihilation; in point four suspects were to be brought before an officer who was to decide if they were to be shot and collective punishment against the local community; in section two of the paper absolved the German soldier from guilt or justice if he committed offences that would otherwise had led to a court martial.

everyone who opposes us.<sup>23</sup>

The links between the army and the SS-Police had been established before June 1941 by meetings between Heydrich and Wagner.<sup>24</sup> The relationship continued as confirmed by the distribution of Brauchitsch's guidelines on partisan warfare issued on the 25<sup>th</sup> October 1941 through the police system.<sup>25</sup> However, the SS-Police had their own distinct politically and racially dictated security missions. This combination was not just obvious from the vast killing programme that was instigated at the beginning of the campaign but can be seen from the operational structures.

## II. Command and Control Structures

The opening of the attack on Russia in June 1941 also opened a first phase of German security policy for the east. This period saw the final phases in the German army's enhancement of its occupation structures. The level of sophistication in security thinking had become highly advanced, bringing together the cumulative lessons learned since 1870. The result was a self-contained structure that was both mobile and covering the terrain in an effective network of security. There were provisions for large internal divisional forces as well as a screen of garrisons that controlled the towns. It combined sector, region and zones of security administration, linked by effective communication networks. The structure had the same ingredients as those laid down in von Trotha's model while reflecting the advances in the next generation of security expertise. The man responsible for its design was Quartermaster-General Wagner who conducted the preparation work in March 1941.<sup>26</sup> From the moment the German armies attacked Russia there were constant high-level meetings and analyses of the rising burden of security. Needless to say the German army initiated traditional measures with the older security manpower organised into Security Divisions (Sicherungsdivisionen). These came under the command of the rear area commanders, patrolling sectors alongside troops designated for local security (Feldkommandanturen).

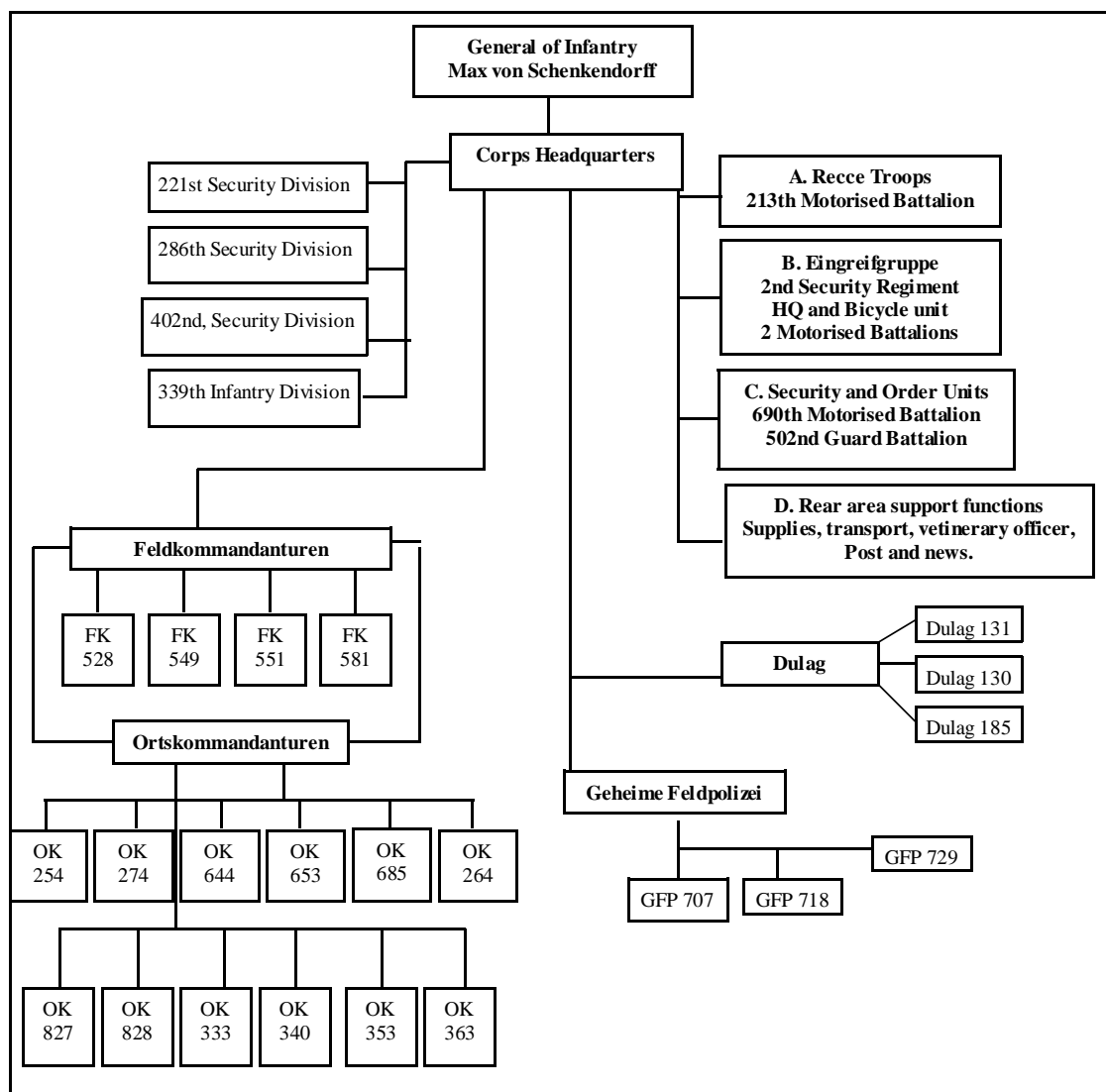
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<sup>23</sup> IWM, IMT, L-221, Martin Bormann memorandum, 16<sup>th</sup> July 1941.

<sup>24</sup> The meetings led to a demarcation between SS and Wehrmacht duties and areas but enabled the SS-Police forces to operate without restriction in the army's immediate rear area.

<sup>25</sup> NA, T175, role 3, frames 2503430 to 2503431, Orpo HQ, 17<sup>th</sup> November 1941, subject: Richtlinien für Partisanenbekämpfung, orders signed by Winkelmann, Daluge's chief of staff.

<sup>26</sup> DRZW, vol.4.

**Diagram 5: Chart of the Rear-Area Army Group Centre (1941)** <sup>27</sup>

In September 1941, General Max von Schenkendorff's staff diagrammatized the order of battle for their forces within the rear area of Army Group Centre in Russia. The structure can be found in Diagram 5. Schenkendorff was a professional officer and committed his team of officers to working with the police and SS. In giving his complete 'support' to the war in the east he had both professional and self-serving benefits. He realised that in the chaos of overlapping authorities and large areas of unmanned terrain that it was important to garner as much co-operation with other policing institutions in his area. The integration of static rear area units balanced

<sup>27</sup> This diagram is based upon the records collected under NA, T501, rolls 1, 2, 3 and BA MA RH22/1 and 2. It is based upon the organisation existing on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 1941.

alongside the mobile and semi-mobile divisions was purposely designed for security duties. The security divisions were the central forces of rear area commander's military authority and power. They worked on the sector level, which called for their designation within an area with pre-determined borders.

A constant question made by veterans and historians alike concerned the security divisions and their level of armaments. There has been much speculation over the poor armaments of the security divisions, but a glance at the weapons roster (Table 3) shows that not all the guns were foreign as has been portrayed. There was in fact a balance between a preponderance of German weaponry and booty from France, Russia and Poland. The divisions were packing a considerable increase in firepower over the formations under von Trotha in 1904. The Feldkommandanturen (district military government offices) were regimental-sized headquarters that monitored security on a regional basis.

**Table 3: The Security Division's allocation of weapons (1941)<sup>28</sup>**

SECURITY DIVISION	RIFLES	PISTOLS	M.P./SMG	LMG/SMG	MORTAR	ARMOURED DETACHMENT	INF. GUN	A/T GUNS	ARTILLERY
221 <sup>st</sup>	8,480	2,468	258	419	99	45	6	12	14
286 <sup>th</sup>	7,798	1,338	219	311	45	-	-	12	12
403 <sup>rd</sup>	9,844	1,690	258	442	58	34	6	18	12
Total	26,122	5,496	735	1,172	202	79	12	42	38

ORIGIN OF RIFLES				
German	Polish	French	Russian	Self owned
16,658	5,622	1,724	1,205	912
63.7%	21.5%	6.7%	4.6%	3.5%

They in turn were in direct seniority over the Ortskommandanturen (military government garrison headquarters), which had an operational staff of fifty men. These were local garrisons that were the early-warning mechanism to the whole system. The Dulags (transit camps) were collection camps for captured prisoners of war from the frontlines. There were other temporary camps in the area and of course municipal jails. The GFP (Secret Field Police) retained its links to the GFP Headquarters in Berlin forming an important part in the overall security regime. The GFP were part of a truly continent-wide security force that generally operated independently within the rear area structure.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, NA, T501, rolls 1, 2, 3 and BA MA RH22/1 and 2; as at 1<sup>st</sup> September 1941.



### The SS-Police Establishment (1941-42)

Within this civil administration the Reichsführer occupied a key position, for a Führer decree of July 17th 1941 had charged Himmler with 'police security in the newly occupied territories' and empowered him 'in discharging his responsibility to give instructions to the Reich Commissars'. Himmler had already nominated HSSPF [Senior SS and Police commanders] as his principal representatives in Russia: Gruppenführer Hans Prützmann as HSSPF North in Riga, Gruppenführer Eric von dem Bach-Zelewski as HSSPF Centre in Minsk and Obergruppenführer Friedrich Jeckeln as HSSPF South in Kiev; in mid 1942 they were reinforced by Brigadeführer Gerret Korseman as HSSPF Caucasus.<sup>29</sup>

The command structure that Himmler adopted for the campaign in Russia was formalised before the campaign opened in about May 1941.<sup>30</sup> The Kommandostab-Reichsführer-SS (KSRFSS – Diagram 6) was the largest formation of the SS at the start of Barbarossa. The first Chief of Staff was Kurt Knoblauch, who had been the second in command of the SS-Totenkopf Regiment. Knoblauch had had a personal problem with the commander Theodor Eicke but led the regiment during its occupation duties in France in 1940. In December 1940 Knoblauch had moved to Berlin, possibly to begin preparations for his work in Russia.<sup>31</sup> The KSRFSS was assigned an overall complement of about 19,000 troops.<sup>32</sup> The principle formations under its command were SS infantry and one SS cavalry brigade. The first year of the KSRFSS was recorded in its war diary and subsequently published.<sup>33</sup> It outlines a daily routine of security operations, killing actions and regular visits by SS and Nazi dignitaries. Yehoshua Büchler has written of the KSRFSS from the standpoint of its killing operations in 1941. Amongst its formations there were significant numbers of SS volunteers from Western European countries. The KSRFSS was known to have directed forces towards the killing of thousands of Jews and Slavs.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Heinz Höhne, 1969, p333, see also Helmut Krausnick et al, 1968, p64 and Hilberg, 1985, p193 and p243.

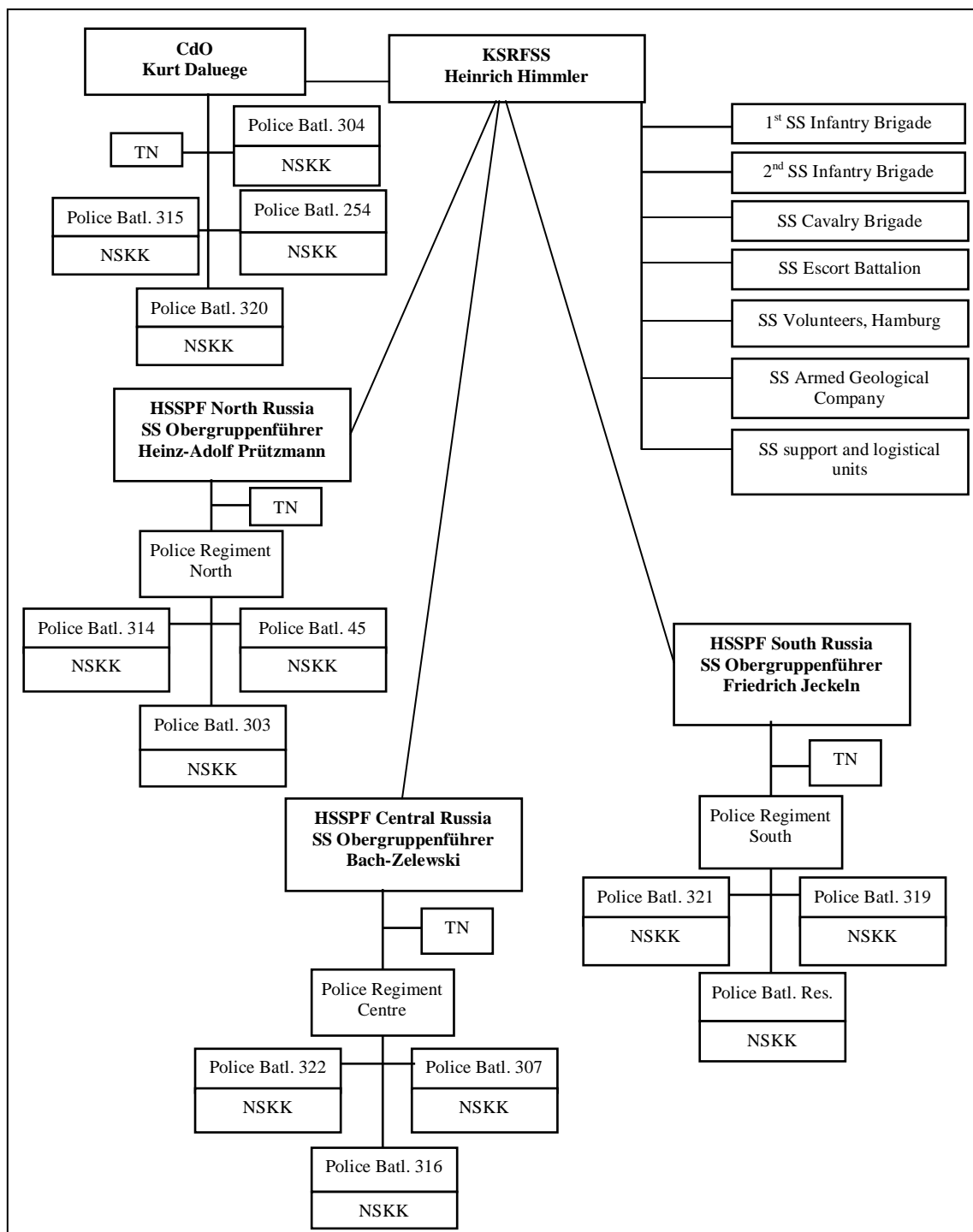
<sup>30</sup> Ernst Rode, 'The Sphere of Duties of the Command Staff of the RFSS and the Chief of German Police and their collaboration with the OKW', FMS, MS -B-629, 18<sup>th</sup> July 1947.

<sup>31</sup> Charles Syndor, *Soldiers of Destruction: The SS Death's Head Division*, (London, 1977), p122.

<sup>32</sup> George Stein, *Hitler's Guard at War: The Waffen SS 1939-1945*, (London, 1967).

<sup>33</sup> Unsere Ehre Heist Treue, *Kriegstagebuch des Kommandostabes Reichsführer-SS Tätigkeitsberichte der 1. Und 2. SS-Inf.-Brigade, der 1. SS-Kav.-Brigade und von Sonderkommando der SS*, (1965).

<sup>34</sup> Yehoshua Büchler, 'Kommandostab Reichsführer-SS: Himmler's Personal Murder Brigades in 1941', in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp11-25, (1986).

**Diagram 6: Organisation chart of the Kommandostab Reichsführer SS (1941)<sup>35</sup>**

SS-Brigadeführer Ernst Rode, the last chief of staff of the KSRFSS, provided a study into its functions in 1947.<sup>36</sup> Rode described its structure as having been modelled on an army headquarters. Apparently it was to be the field headquarters for two

<sup>35</sup> Model based upon documents from archives, the Rode testimony and the KSRFSS diary of 1941.

<sup>36</sup> Rode, 1947, p2.

commanders: Heinrich Himmler and Kurt Daluege (Rode did not mention Reinhard Heydrich). Rode's interpretation of the Heydrich-Wagner agreement was that the KSRFSS would confine itself to police duties, 'to maintain order and to secure the rear areas during the forthcoming Russian campaign... From available intelligence reports, partisan action was foreseen and expected with certainty.'<sup>37</sup> Its authority was confined to the communication and civilian zones. Representatives from all branches of SS and police manned the headquarters.

Himmler took his special train 'Heinrich' into the sector of Hitler's headquarters in East Prussia, to be used as his personal quarters. Himmler retained his offices in Berlin but linked his private train into the communication network. The main function was the collection of information and distribution of orders to and from SS security forces to facilitate clear decision-making. According to his appointments book Himmler spent time at whichever offices were appropriate.<sup>38</sup> In Diagram 6 the broad KSRFSS organisation and tactical structure illustrated with senior officers and formations. With so large an organisation the command and control network needed to be reasonably sophisticated to ensure its smooth working. The central job of the HSSPF was in the co-ordination and control of this system. The structure illustrates how the HSSPF and the Chef der Ordnungspolizei maintained control of the security forces. Each of Himmler's senior representatives controlled a regiment of Ordnungspolizei.<sup>39</sup> It is possible the comments of Ernst Rode, some years later, that the dual command concept would have meant a structure as set out in Diagram 6.

### The Ordnungspolizei

The controlling agency for the Police offices came under the Hauptamt Ordnungspolizei of Kurt Daluege. He had extended the tactical mechanism of control of the police in the field through the introduction of the Inspectors of the Orpo (Inspekture der Ordnungspolizei - IdO), a management level to oversee specific branches of the police.<sup>40</sup> After the inspectors came the commanders of the Orpo in the field, the Befehlshaber der Ordnungspolizei (BdO). These men also found themselves responsible

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<sup>37</sup> Rode, 1947, p4.

<sup>38</sup> DKHH.

<sup>39</sup> Two police battalions originated from Vienna, the rest came from German cities including Berlin, Bremen, Duisburg, Cologne, Breslau and Halle.

<sup>40</sup> Georg Tessin, und Kannapin, Norbert, *Waffen-SS und Ordnungspolizei im Kriegseinsatz 1939-1945*, (Osnabrück, 2000), pp533-546.

to Himmler's HSSPF as well as Daluge's inspectors. Responsibility flowed downwards to local police commanders (i.e. Gendarmerie or Wasserschutzpolizei). This was a dual reporting system. The Orpo Battalions were slightly less well armed than a normal army rifle battalion but generally better supplied with motorised wheeled vehicles. This reliance upon wheeled transport confined most police battalions to the main arterial roads.

### III. SS-Police Strategic Communications

SS-Oberstgruppenführer Karl Wolf was once questioned as to how the SS officers involved in extermination received their orders, he responded without equivocation, 'Whatever these persons had to do with each other was always taken care of by telephone.'<sup>41</sup> Through the employment of liaison officers and the telecommunications network, Himmler was able to control his organisation very effectively. The liaison officers and adjutants kept Himmler informed and up to date on all parts of the organisation. They were granted the status of personal representatives, which offered them the freedom to monitor performance at first hand. They reported directly to Himmler, thereby increasing their influence; their recommendations usually led to decisions. The men placed in these positions could include members of the Waffen-SS or police; indeed one of the most well known Waffen-SS regimental commanders, Jochen Peiper, was a liaison officer.<sup>42</sup>

Himmler also exploited the flexibility of telecommunications to the full. This was conducted on three levels through the telephone, the main radio-signals network and the ultra coding machines. The SS-Police system was large enough to require the publication of a comprehensive telephone directory. The police signals network was alleged to have dated back to 1920. The central telephone system was located as widely as possible in all police offices. Telegraph and radio were the chief means of reporting police communiqués. Up to 1938 the telegraph system was supplied by the postal service. After that time the postal service could no longer cope with the traffic levels of the police demands. This led the police to construct their own telegraph and radio network. The vast majority of operators were women and the signals system was the

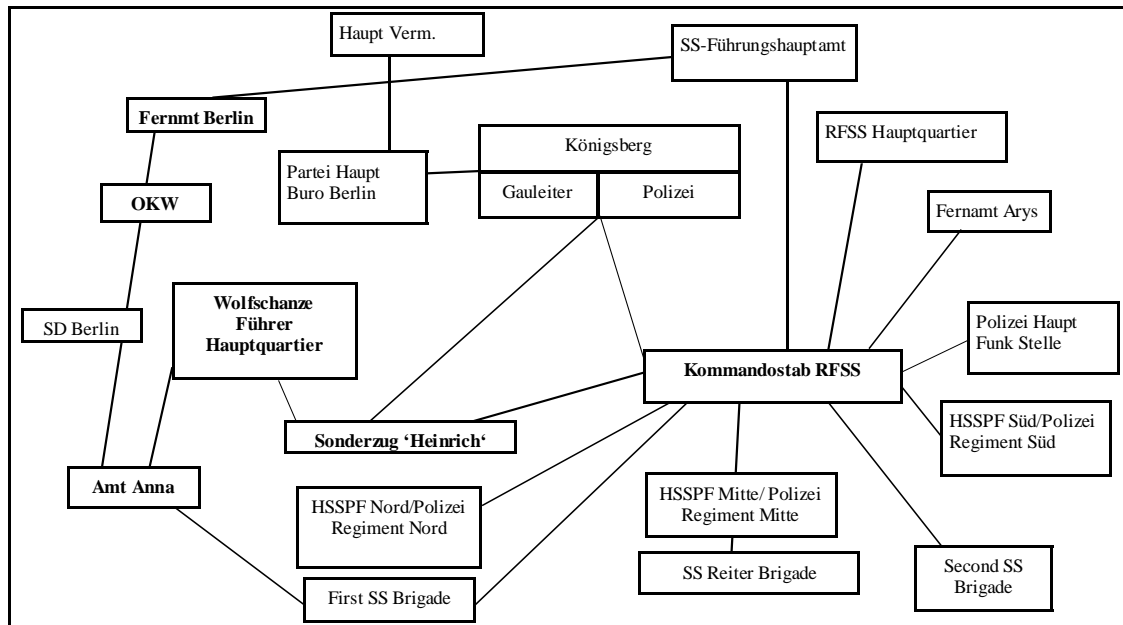
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<sup>41</sup> IWM, Karl Wolff, interrogation No. 4573, 28<sup>th</sup> January 1948.

<sup>42</sup> Michael Reynolds, *Steel Inferno: 1<sup>st</sup> SS Panzer Corps in Normandy*, (Staplehurst, 1997). While the author acknowledges Peiper's work as a liaison officer as having links to the genocide programme there is still a general trend to presume the Waffen-SS trooper was only a soldier and this was not the case.

responsibility of an inspector grade policemen.<sup>43</sup> One commander was Major-General of Police Robert Schlake who was also an SS-Standartenführer. The new system was built between 1938 and 1940. There was a switchboard to link networks of police areas and regions. By June 1941, this network had developed into a complex structure as can be seen in Diagram 7.

**Diagram 7: SS-Police Eastern Front communication network (1941)<sup>44</sup>**



At the heart of the network were large transmitters of 20 kilowatts located in Berlin. Each regional centre had its own radio station, a Funkstelle that used 800 watt and 5 kilowatt machines with a range of up to 1000 kilometres. They had their own generators for power. Leitfunkstellen (local stations) used 100-watt transmitters with ranges of up to 100-150 kilometres. The Leitfunkstellen and Funkstellen could cross communicate locally. With cables cut by bombing and partisans the radio became the main form of back up system. The radios used both long and short wave frequencies. In the occupied territories the police used an extension of the telegraph system linking cities and short wave radio sets were carried in the field. These were known as Panzergeräte (tank sets). The army supplied 10-20 watt powered, voice operated sets, requiring the minimum of training and were charged by a bicycle generator. The Wasserschutzpolizei (River and Coastal police) had special 15 watt sets built into their

<sup>43</sup> NA, T1270, roll 31, frames 940-0945, consolidated interrogations of police operations by US 12<sup>th</sup> Army, 4<sup>th</sup> June 1945.

<sup>44</sup> Unsere Ehre Heist, 1965, cover piece.

patrol boats. The police used radio vans (Funkwagen), which had been designed for emergencies in the cities but proved valuable in the field. The motorised gendarmerie carried voice operated sets with a range up to 150 kilometres. The police regiments had their own signals company of 60-70 men. They had a few radio vehicles and two long-range radio vans. They tended to use 100 watt long wave and 70-watt short wave sets. The signals were always deployed close to the commander. Mobile communications were organised into companies for battalions and battalions for regiments. They usually had 2-3 radio vehicles, 2 long-range vehicles and 60-65 men; they also used portable sets.<sup>45</sup>

The use of signals equipment was crucial to all security work. The HSSPF staff offices issued their own Tarntafel (radio transmission coded words). The format was simple, a list of official words were published on one side of the page (alphabetically) and on the other side a space was left for the signals officer to write in the appropriate codes for each operation.<sup>46</sup> In the case of Operation Nasses Dreieck, discussed in greater detail in chapter eight, the role of signals had clearly become central to all security operations:

The functioning cables between tactical position of the Kampfgruppe and Kiev were not working. New connections had to be made. The 120th Luftwaffe Signals Regiment attached lines from the Luftwaffe system at the Leki axis, with short-wave cable, double cable and single cable to connect the Kampfgruppe with Group Nieder. A signals cable was laid across the river Desna, which was replaced later by a normal river cable, put in place by the Wasserschutzpolizei. Altogether, 60kilometers of cable was laid with 2 large and 3 smaller radio networks in place. The work of the signal troops ensured the Kampfgruppe was in contact with Kiev as well as at tactical level. A radio system was created with the Hungarians by the use of a radio-wagon (Funkwagen).<sup>47</sup>

One final aspect of strategic communications concerns the role of the Nationalsozialistisches Kraftfahrkorps (NSKK) the transportation corps of the Nazi Party. The NSKK provided the motor transport detachment for each police battalion committed to Barbarossa. Its origins dated back to the time before the Nazi takeover of

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<sup>45</sup> NA, T1270, roll 31, frames 940-0945, consolidated interrogations of police operations by US 12<sup>th</sup> Army, 4<sup>th</sup> June 1945.

<sup>46</sup> NA, T354, roll 650, Tarntafel Nr.2, HSSPF Russland Mitte and Weisruthenien, copy 187 (n.d.).

<sup>47</sup> BA MA, RL 20/302, Kriegstagebuch 3 Kdr. Fl. Bau 4/XIII, Oberst Altermann, anlage 4 (document 9-16), Kampfgruppe Römer, abschrift (report dated 18.5.1943), Unternehmen Nasses Dreieck' vom 5.5. bis 16. 5. 1943, signed von Römer.

power in 1933. Their original purpose had been to coordinate and centralise transport for Nazi supporters to attend party rallies, or to take SA members to a fight against Communist Party agitators. The NSKK supplied the personal drivers for most of the leading Nazi dignitaries. In the opening rounds of the Russian campaign the NSKK were used to transport the police battalions to their assignments. This placed an essentially civilian organisation within the areas designated for security and killing actions. This type of civilian function was not new to the occupation zones or security work. The army had used much the same type of German civilian manpower in all of its occupations since 1870, as observed in chapter one.

#### **IV. The Formations of the Staatsschutzkorps**

The respective histories of the SS, army and police have always tended to isolate the groups of formations that entered Russia in June 1941. Excellent histories such as Helmut Krausnick's study of the Einsatzgruppen or Christopher Browning's research into Reserve Police Battalion 101 have isolated the workings of individual units. When considering the SS-Police establishment that entered Russia in 1941 it was apparent how efficiently the system worked. This was partly due to the command, control and communication system and partly due to prior planning. It also seems to indicate that the experiences of previous occupations had raised their expertise in security operations. One could rightly ask the question of why it has taken so long for historians to explain the role of the Police. Reitlinger provides an explanation when he went on to say:

Hans Gisevius, too, found the lot of drafted elderly German policemen a hard one. It was not their fault that their task turned out to be one of racial extermination. Gisevius does not suggest that it was the fault of his friends, Daluge, Nebe and Helldorf, all of whom had worn the red trousers of a general in Hitler's police.<sup>48</sup>

#### The SD Einsatzgruppen

Einsatzgruppen operations ranged from 1938 to 1944, operating in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Russia and the Baltic states. They were established before the invasion of Poland to arrest and kill Jews, Polish intellectuals and others. The Einsatzgruppen were formed from officer cadres that included highly educated men, including university

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<sup>48</sup> Reitlinger, 1956, p127, was writing of the evidence Gisevius gave at Nuremberg, having been a senior Gestapo official. In this case Gisevius who had been a close associate with Daluge and Nebe under Göring's regime could really see how much they had become the backbone of Himmler's SS-Police establishment.

professors.<sup>49</sup> The SD activity reports were both in-depth intelligence reports on the effectiveness of social control as well as the requirements for future action. Helmut Krausnick went some way to explain the linkages between the Einsatzgruppen, with the Army and the HSSPFs in anti-partisan operations and mass killing of Jews during the first year of the Russian campaign.<sup>50</sup> Krausnick identified the many cases of the killing of Jews that the Nazis explained as a necessary security measures. The destruction of the Jews in the east was regarded as the pivotal mission of the internal security programme. This was a political pre-emptive strike force that had absorbed the doctrine of Jews, Slavs and Bolsheviks as the deadliest enemies of National Socialism. Although the Einsatzgruppen have been condemned for their killing activities, their really devastating and most pernicious effect was in their intelligence role. For this they used radio interception methods, 'trusties' working under cover and even agents within the partisan groups. In the large scale anti-partisan operations conducted between 1942 and 1944 there were always SD forces present to monitor the movements of the partisans, keeping operational commanders fully informed of any changes. In this sense they were to become the reconnaissance force of *Bandenbekämpfung*.

### The Waffen-SS

The history of the Waffen-SS has balances between their skills in combat and their outright criminality. The Waffen-SS was crucial in the formation of the *Staatsschutzkorps*. Firstly, it was armed and trained as a military force. In terms of youth, training and military hardware, the Waffen-SS outstripped its fellow SS-Police formations. Secondly, the officers of the Waffen-SS combined doctrinarism and military prowess into a lethal cocktail of fanaticism. Thirdly, these men formed a cadre increasing the SS-Police establishment through an expansion not unlike the *Krümpersystem*, by providing leadership and war experience to the 'green' formations. Finally, as highly trained racial-ideological warriors they rarely flinched at orders calling for large-scale killing. George Stein was one of the first historians to conduct academic

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<sup>49</sup>The leading authorities on this subject are: Helmut Krausnik, 1985. Peter Klein (Hg), *Die Einsatzgruppen in der besetzten Sowjetunion 1941/42: Die Tätigkeits- und Lageberichte des Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD*, (Berlin 1997), this is a collection of essays based upon the most recent research on the subject and includes an essay by Christian Gerlach which examined Einsatzgruppen B. This unit operated behind army group centre and its commander Artur Nebe was later hanged for his connections in the 20<sup>th</sup> July 1944 bomb plot to kill Hitler.

<sup>50</sup> Krausnick, 1985, pp214-218.



research into the Waffen-SS. He concluded that the Waffen-SS was a tarnished shield because of its war crimes. However, he also concluded that those men most responsible for the anti-partisan pogroms did not represent the essence of the Waffen-SS.<sup>51</sup>

Bernd Wegner came to the conclusion that fighting alongside the army with its own elitism as political soldiers and indoctrinated with the spirit of the Kampfgemeinschaft (fighting community) as a revolutionary military order, the Waffen-SS fanatically committed its crimes. Wegner made a pointed comment about the Waffen-SS in explaining their attitude towards military traditionalism, ‘...the Waffen-SS, as a result of its integration into the all-encompassing system of organised violence that was the SS, neither possessed the professional autonomy of the army nor could it be defined as strictly ‘military’ in the traditional sense.’<sup>52</sup> The Waffen-SS represented the backbone of the early years of the Staatsschutzkorps. In 1941 it represented the physical presence of the three brigades assigned to the KSRFSS and several hundred men to each of the Einsatzgruppen.

### The Police Formations

In fact many of the worst atrocities attributed to the SS were actually committed by German policemen, not a few of whom had been walking a beat or directing traffic until the outbreak of war.<sup>53</sup>

Thus the men who carried out the forcible deportations and settlements in Poland, though passed off as SS, were in fact pre-Nazi German policemen.<sup>54</sup>

In chapter two the uniformed branches of the police underwent a series of structural changes between 1936 and 1939. Following the expansion of police responsibilities to include the extensive and growing occupation territories the police restructured again. According to Tessin and the surviving records the situation on the 20<sup>th</sup> August 1940 was a total of 101 Police Battalions (including three ethnic German battalions and 38 Police Battalions in training).<sup>55</sup> The distribution of police units in occupied territories in 1940 was as follows:

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<sup>51</sup> Stein, 1967, p291.

<sup>52</sup> Wegner, 1990, p3.

<sup>53</sup> Stein, 1990, Introduction, pXXX.

<sup>54</sup> Reitlinger, 1957, p126.

<sup>55</sup> Tessin et al, 2000, and BA MA R19/97.

**Table 4: Police battalions and manpower (1940)**

COUNTRY	BATTALIONS	OFFICERS	MEN
Czechoslovakia	10	144	5,401
Poland (G-G)	13	227	8,905
Eastern provinces of Poland	7	63	3,500
Norway	6	73	3,270
Holland	4	58	2,420
Totals	40	565	23,496

The same document, of the 20<sup>th</sup> August 1940 presented the total police manpower at the start of the war at 131,000 police officials. From autumn 1939 a further 26,000 had been recruited alongside 6,000 ethnic Germans in the eastern territories. Men were taken into the SS-Police division leaving about 150,000 to conduct occupation duties.

With the campaign in Russia from June 1941 the Ordnungspolizei had become a well equipped and highly mobile (security) force. The rebuilding process of the 1930s had begun to show results. Both Daluge and Himmler had not hesitated to push more police units into the east. However, the scale of the security mission was becoming increasingly difficult for the Police to complete. With every German army victory substantial territories were added to the burden of occupation. The vast expanses of territory were beyond the limited police resources. This placed extraordinary pressure on the police, which rationalised its operational standing by formulating ratios of police coverage by country and by population (Table 5). To conduct policing effectively, the police according to Daluge, were short of 69,000 men (Table 6). The police strengths in the west and those intended for the colonies were reduced to compensate for the shortages in the east. This kind of balancing act remained critical as the war in the east developed.<sup>56</sup>

In November 1941 the shortages in police manpower had become critical and they were not entirely relieved by the introduction of collaboration policemen introduced from July 1941. On 20 November 1941, referring to his previous report, Daluge produced a further analysis of the condition of policing in the security zones. The shortfall had increased to 209,564. The expansion of the Reich territories was itself physical proof of Lebensraum in the immediate sense. Daluge began to probe for possibilities to alleviate this situation. He initially asked to take back the policemen from the Wehrmacht on the grounds that the war had gone so well; in this way an 111,000 police reserve could be released. To police the Russian territory he suggested

<sup>56</sup> NA, T580, roll 222, frame 2270886, Chef der Ordnungspolizei, Die Verstärkung der Polizei für ihre Kriegs-und Friedensaufgaben, 20<sup>th</sup> August 1941, not meant for distribution.

that at least another 93,564 men were required and as an immediate necessity 43,000 were called for. Daluege also raised the possibility of a return of the members of the Landespolizei transferred to the Wehrmacht in 1935. This was done during the mobilisation plans in the first expansion of the army in 1935. He asked whether those men employed in security duties used in the rear areas might also be returned to the Ordnungspolizei. As another palliative he began to assign members of the colonial police and the fire service to security duties.<sup>57</sup>

**Table 5: Ratios of police manpower in the occupation and Reich territories (1941)<sup>58</sup>**

TERRITORY	HOMES	HOMES	SCALE	SCALE	HOUSES PER 1 KM	HOUSES PER 1 KM	RATIO OF POLICE TO HOUSES	RATIO OF POLICE TO HOUSES	NUMBERS OF POLICEMEN	NUMBERS OF POLICEMEN
	1940	1941	1940	1941	1940	1941	1940	1941	1940	1941
Reich	79,000,000	92,001,000	583,280	716,817	135,4	128,3	1: 475	1: 395	166,370	232,505
Czecho-Slovakia	6,800,000	6,800,000	49,947	49,947	139,0	139,0	1: 1157	1: 829	5,875	8,200
Poland	10,550,000	14,900,734	95,609	144,141	110	103,3	1: 860	1: 734	12,270	20,289
Russia		153,940,426		21,653,000		7,1		1: 1214		118,716
Netherlands	8,639,500	8,639,500	34,181	34,181	252,7	252,7	1: 3323	1: 1450	2,600	5,955
Norway	2,908,000	2,908,000	322,599	322,599	9	9	1: 831	1: 424	3,500	7,089
Colonies:				2,711,605						4,929
Weisse (Sic) (whites)		42,550				0,015		1: 8		
Farbige (Sic) (coloureds)		14,232,800				5,2		1: 2879		

**Table 6: The ‘Daluege shortfall’ by age group**

ORPO TOTAL FIGURES	1940	1941
Actual Position	150,353	188,119
Required	219,865	397,683
Shortfall	69,500	209,564
Age shortfalls		
35-40 –	7,000	21,200
32-34 –	9,000	27,200
29-31 –	10,000	30,200
26-28 –	21,000	63,200
22-25 –	22,500	67,764

<sup>57</sup> NA, T580, roll 222, *ibid*, Chef der Ordnungspolizei, Die Verstärkung der Polizei für ihre Kriegs- und Friedensaufgaben, 20<sup>th</sup> November 1941, not meant for distribution.

<sup>58</sup> How the police arrived at the colonial figures or what they referred to is unclear.

## V. Colonial Models and Solutions

From the broadest historical viewpoint, colonial warfare has largely been disregarded as 'small wars' with little bearing upon world events.<sup>59</sup> Yet, the findings from this research strongly suggest colonialism played a significant influence upon Germany, especially in the post-colonial Weimar Republic and particularly upon leading Nazi policymakers. Indeed this evidence has always been visible as in the case of Oberst (Rtd.) Karl Gaisse. In April 1951, he presented a paper to the US Army Foreign Military Studies project entitled the 'Partisan War in Croatia'. By way of an introduction he referred to his time as a colonial police officer in both German Togoland and Cameroon. In 1933 he had emigrated overseas but was repatriated to Germany in 1942. That same year Gaisser was assigned to the Colonial Police School, in Oranienburg near Berlin, during which time he had trained colonial police officers and NCOs in guerrilla warfare.<sup>60</sup> The increasing problem facing the Germans once they had penetrated deep into Soviet Russia was adequate policing for the occupation. The reason behind the German chose to employ colonial solutions to answer their security problems, following the invasion of Soviet Russia, illustrates the lack of practical preparation behind the imposition of Lebensraum; and, suggests that it was a post invasion option. However, the decision to employ large numbers of collaborationists was far from straightforward.

The major hurdle for the Germans was not raising significant numbers of collaborationist forces to supplement manpower shortages. Rather, it concerned Adolf Hitler personally and his prejudices:

*We must never permit anybody but the Germans to carry arms!* [translator's italics] This is especially important; even when it seems easier at first to enlist the armed support of foreign subjugated nations, it is wrong to do so. In the end this will prove to be to our disadvantage unconditionally and unavoidably. Only the German may carry arms, not the Slav, not the Czech, not the Cossack nor the Ukrainian!<sup>61</sup>

Yet within days of this statement Himmler and his cohorts had moved in an opposite direction. This is a policy conundrum that has eluded explanation: what changed Hitler's mind? One obvious answer was the limitation of this manpower to police duties and the play on words between the Schutzmannschaft and the Schutztruppen. Martin

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<sup>59</sup> Killingray, 1997.

<sup>60</sup> Oberst der Polizei, Karl Gaisser, FMS P005b, Partisan Warfare in Croatia, pp1-4 (n.d.).

<sup>61</sup> IWM, IMT, L-221, op cit.

Dean was unable to find an answer following an extensive research of the Ukrainian Schutzmannschaft.<sup>62</sup> The large numbers of willing SchutzMänner made it relatively straightforward to build a vast number of battalions. It is worth noting that Hitler maintained his stance on foreigners in German uniforms right up to 1945:

Well, I was against it, to have them dressed in our uniforms. But who was for it? That was our dear army, who had their own ideas.....I can't give them a change of clothes, we have no uniforms....One has no sense of honour around here. Every wretch is put in German uniform. I was always against it. I was against putting Cossacks in German uniforms. The British would not think of putting English clothes on an Indian. Such shamelessness exists only with us because there's no character in it. Otherwise one would not put German steel helmets on the heads of others. The British let the Indians run around as natives.<sup>63</sup>

Hitler's final statement is also interesting for he blamed the army for raising foreign troops. There is some evidence to suggest the army was at least thinking about the colonial situation in the late 1930s:

The Schutztruppe had 260 Germans and 2,470 coloureds. In support there was a Polizeitruppe of 55 Whites and 2,140 coloureds. The proportion of coloureds and military protection troops [Schutztruppen] is in strong relation to the proportion to the population. The proportions in [Southwest Africa] were different where there were no coloured in the Schutztruppe whereas in the Polizeitruppe the coloureds represented 40% of all operatives.<sup>64</sup>

They had also studied the Italian operations in Abyssinia and the Spanish Civil War, the findings had more than a hint of colonialism within them:

The Spanish Civil War had become a World War for the truth between communism and anti- communism. The red propaganda broadcasts were made from a transmitter in Barcelona, employed by Russian staff using Bolshevik methods...and declared Moroccan troops, Africans [as in native warriors], that came to destroy the culture and civilisation of Spain, they murdered and raped Spanish and children. Italian and German have been called by Franco, together with the African hordes to plunder and destroy the country. Franco has made promises to the fascist states at expense of

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<sup>62</sup> Martin Dean, *Collaboration in the Holocaust: Crimes of the Local Police in Byelorussia and Ukraine, 1941-1944*, (London, 2000),

<sup>63</sup> IWM, IMT, PS-3786, Stenographic transcription in the Headquarters of the Führer. Discussion on the situation of 27<sup>th</sup> January 1945. First copy of second transmission, No.24/25, those present included Hermann Göring, Keitel, Jodl, Guderian, Colonel von Brauchitsch, Fegelein, began at 16.20 hrs concluded 18.50hrs.

<sup>64</sup> BA MA, RH13/ v.37, Berlin April 1938 (Wehrmachtsakademie Nr. 871/38 g.k).

Spain... Spain will then be nothing more than a colony of the Fascists.<sup>65</sup>

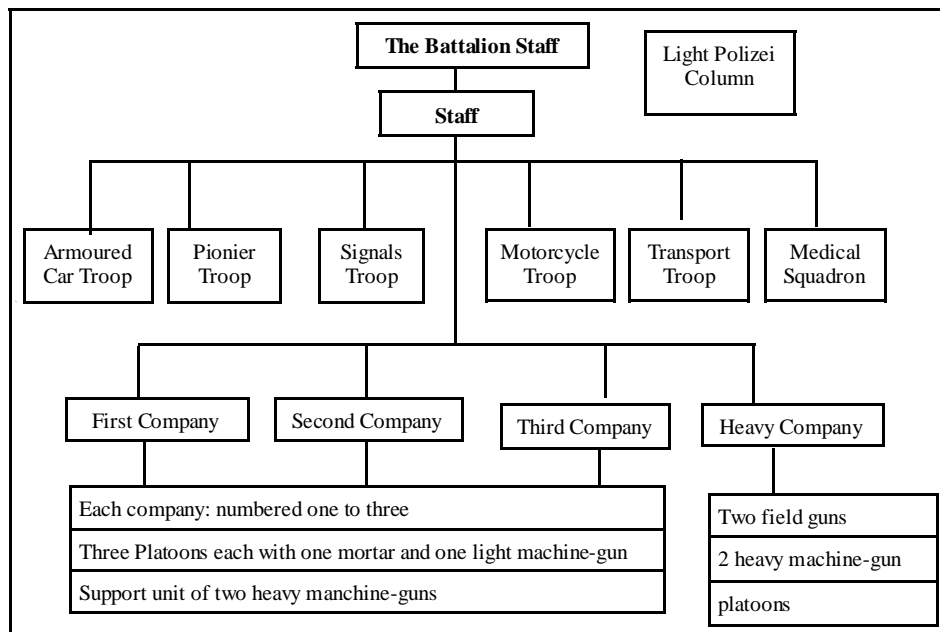
Oberst Gaisser's experience at the Colonial Police School in Oranienburg did not therefore take place in an intellectual vacuum within either the Army or the SS/Police establishment. There were two SS-Police schools, one in Berlin-Oranienburg and the other in Vienna, Austria; they both had comprehensive training programmes.<sup>66</sup> On the 21<sup>st</sup> January 1941, in a speech given during the 'day of the Police inspectors', Kurt Daluege referred to the colonial question (Kolonialfrage). He said Generalleutnant Pfeffer-Wildenbruch was to become the inspector in charge of the Colonial Police Department (Kolonialpolizeiamt), within the central offices (Hauptamt) of the Ordnungspolizei. Daluege said he had stumbled across the Berlin Colonial School, which had been a surprise because they prepared 600 policemen and 1,500 officials (Beamten). The training of these men were to turn them into the best quality, and thereby not be an embarrassment against the older colonial powers like England.<sup>67</sup> The functions of the two colonial police schools in April 1941 provide the first indication of another strand of SS security thinking, in this case going beyond the eradication of internal enemies towards the preparation for policing a large-scale empire. This process can be seen in the preferred military structure offered to students at the colonial police academies in Diagram 8 below.

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<sup>65</sup> BA MA, RH13/ v.6, Berlin 1938, Wehrmachtsakademie Nr. 869/38 g.k pp 31 and pp52-54.

<sup>66</sup> NA, T175, roll 13, frames 2515813 to 2515890

<sup>67</sup> NA, T580, roll 216, frame 0473. Ansprache des Chefs der Ordnungspolizei anlässlich der Tagung der Inspektoren der Ordnungspolizei am 21. Januar 1941, p24.

**Diagram 8: Colonial Police School model of a motorised battalion (1941)<sup>68</sup>****Table 7: Colonial motorised battalion manpower**

	OFFICERS	NCOS	TROOPERS
Staff Sections and Commander	8	81	189
Each Company	4	41	122
Heavy Company	4	49	122
Totals	24	253	875

Guidelines for colonial military tactics were also issued. In the opening section of the guidelines the police officers were provided with a doctrinal background to German colonial policy. The reliance upon the armed forces in times of emergency, as was common practice with the Imperial German army, was referred to. The nature of war was also raised:

The aim of the fighting in this war, in the west the destruction of their [allies] abilities to continue fighting, but the war against Bolshevism is their destruction per se... In colonial war it will always be the case of the power to fight. The tasks of the battle will be to solve the problems and may involve using milder aims; the occupation of areas, destruction of facilities, place leaders in exile, send communities into the deserts, control of water sources, separation of intellectuals [or at least writers] and punishments ranging from taking away the kettle to wholesale destruction of the

<sup>68</sup> NA, T175, roll 13, frames 2515813 to 2515825.

settlement.<sup>69</sup>

This same guidebook added to the general praise of Lettow-Vorbeck's practice of 'Kleiner Krieg'. These were illustrative of the best tactics against the English, with a high degree of improvisation. His methods were ascribed to being the finest example of discipline in combating all opponents in Africa. The guidelines are also similar to the 1942 booklet on Bandenbekämpfung and together they not only prove a consistency in SS security methods but also form an institutional doctrine. Later in the document there was advice on how to use vehicles and not rely on them as had also been shown by Lettow-Vorbeck when he left the English to flounder with their lorries. Further on, the cadet was pressed to become a leader in the image of Lettow-Vorbeck. To build on this quality the leader was expected to use skills of reconnaissance and intelligence. Under security, the leader was advised to use silence, to march with care, and to attack the enemy with skill.<sup>70</sup>

**Table 8: Manpower and weapons of a colonial battalion (1942)**

UNIT	OFF	NCO	ASKARI	SPEC- IALISTS	VEHICLE	HAND-GUNS RIFLES	MOUNTAIN FIELD GUNS	HEAVY MACHINE GUNS	FIELD-GUNS	OTHER
Battalion staff combined	8	81	189	9	124	204	39			vehicles
1 company	4	41	188		42	150	42	2		3 mortars
2 company	4	41	188		42	150	42	2		3 mortars
3 company	4	41	188		42	150	42	2		3 mortars
Heavy Company:										
Commander and troop	1	12	15		10	9	3			
1. MG troop	1	10	27		7	20	3	4		
2. MG troop	1	10	27		7	20	3	4		
Infantry Gun troop	1	7	23		10	13	4		2	
Gef.Troß [sic]		7	19		13	19	4			2 Field Kitchens
Gep. u . Verpfl.Troß [sic]		3	11		5	9	4			
Battalion staff combined	24	253	875	9						

<sup>69</sup> NA, T175, roll 13, frames 2515813 to 2515890, Richtlinien für die kolonialtaktische Ausbildung an den Kolonialpolizei-Schulen (n.d.).

<sup>70</sup> NA, T175, roll 13, frames 2515813 to 2515890, not all the students training was confined to military themes, *Die Völker der Erde*, 'Im Judentum rassistisch stark verankert' (racialism is strongly represented in Judaism).



**Table 9: Detailed breakdown of the battalion (1942)**

UNIT	OFF	NCO	ASKARI	SPEC- IALISTS	VEHICLE	HAND GUNS RIFLES	LT M GUNS	SPECIAL WEAPONS	SPECIAL VEHICLES
Battalion staff									
Stab	4	6	18	5	13	31	3		
One Company:									
Commander and troop	1	9	9		8	8	3		
1 section	1	6	47		6	38	10	1 mortar	
2 section	1	6	47		6	38	10	1 mortar	
3 section	1	6	47		6	38	10	1 mortar	
Heavy machine-gun group		4	12		2	8	1	2 guns	
Gef. Troß [Sic]		7	15		9	15	4		2 Field Kitchens
Gep. U. Verpfl. Troß [Sic]		3	11		5	5	4		
Gef.-Troß [Sic]		16	36	2	21	40	5		2 kitchens
Staff company:									
Transport section	1	8	43		48	36	11		
Signals section	1	20	24		12	42	3		
Pionier section	1	14	47		12	43	11		
Armoured car section	1	14	6		7	7	2		3 armoured cars

### From Schutztruppen to Schutzmannschaft

[The] so-called Schutztruppen (protectorate troops)... were not integrated into the German military establishment. Instead they were subordinated to the Colonial Department of the German Foreign Office, a civil institution. (The troops consisted of army volunteers and a levy of indigenous soldiers who were, however, called up only for a limited period which allowed their numbers to vary according to need)... [The] relatively low numerical strength of the German Schutztruppen: the number of soldiers active in the colonial army never amounted to more than 6,500 in all, if we disregard the phase of the great uprisings.<sup>71</sup>

The decision to employ local indigenous manpower in the Schutzmannschaft was issued on the 25<sup>th</sup> July 1941. Martin Dean has made considerable efforts to research the history of the men who joined the Schutzmannschaft:

For patrolling the countryside, the German Gendarmerie established a network of small posts in each of the rayon towns. The ratio of Gendarmes to local police (Schutzmannschaft), however, was initially at least one to five and worsened from the summer of 1942. Accordingly the local police played an important role in the functioning and image of the German occupation regime.<sup>72</sup>

According to Martin Dean these forces were raised, 'consisting of both mobile auxiliary police battalions and smaller units serving at local posts (Einzeldienst), these collaborators would be vital for the execution of all Himmler's police tasks in the areas

<sup>71</sup> Kirsten Zirkel, 'Military power in German colonial policy: the Schutztruppen and their leaders in East and South-west Africa 1888-1918', in Killingray and Omissi (ed), 1999, p91.

<sup>72</sup> Dean, 2000, p27.

under civil administration.’<sup>73</sup> The explanations for cooperation remain predictable, such as the means to staying in their own area with privileges and money. It has also been assumed that it was an ill-fated attempt at revenge against the Soviet Union. Yet it seems more likely that it was purely an opportunity to stay at home. Collaboration according to Werner Rings falls under four categories, neutral collaboration; unconditional collaboration; conditional collaboration; tactical collaboration.<sup>74</sup> Inevitably this subject leads to the question of why these men seemed so willing to participate in brutal policies and in Nazi genocide. In actual fact there are no clear or obvious answers.

Kirsten Zirkel as identified some of the attributes in the formation of the Schutztruppen.. The long distances involved and the slowness of communications with Berlin, granted unlimited authority to the local commander, the man on the spot. The original German security plans for the Schutztruppen relied upon small numbers of men placed in strategic points across the colony. By 1892 the Kaiserliche Schutztruppe für Deutsch-Südwestafrika had grown to 250 men. For example, in the district of Warmbad there was a civilian community of 143 men (who could also be called upon in the event of trouble), with six police stations manned by sixteen Schutztruppen (one officer, three NCOs and twelve troopers), along with two civilian policemen (Landespolizei).<sup>75</sup> David Killingray has noted that the colonies were intended to be economically independent of the homeland. The colonists were to not only suppose to establish an economic system and to institute locally recruited forces for internal security. He also identified the potential of guerrilla warfare as the means by which indigenous peoples could stem the tide of colonisation, ‘Guerrilla warfare enabled inferior armed forces and even small polities to hold out against greatly superior imperial armies and prevent the consolidation and ‘pacification’ colonial territory.’<sup>76</sup> Killingray has suggested that prior to the First World War the experiences of colonialism, however brutal, did not prepare the powers for world war. He has written that the great powers had learned little from their experience in colonial warfare.<sup>77</sup> Perhaps it is now time for reflection upon the real

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Rings, 1979.

<sup>75</sup> Schwabe, 1907, p51.

<sup>76</sup> Killingray and Omissi (ed), 1999, p8.

<sup>77</sup> Killingray and Omissi (ed), 1999, p7.

scale of influence that colonialism as had on world affairs, especially since 1900, and how far it contributed to the brutalisation process within European war.

## **VI. In the Tradition of von Trotha**

There are recognisable differences between the reports the SS Cavalry Brigade made to the Wehrmacht and those sent to the SS command. The former, to the Commander of the Army Group Rear Area, keep up the pretence of a mopping-up operation due to military necessity, while the reports to the Reichsführer SS (Himmler) leave nothing to the imagination, as do his orders, in spite of the smokescreen terms used in both ('Jewish looters'). It would be wrong, however, to read into this idea the idea that the SS used the mopping-up tasks as a cover in order to speed up the annihilation of the Jews without the knowledge of the Wehrmacht.<sup>78</sup>

The practice of security in the period from June 1941 to July 1942, relied on pacification through terror and social control through widespread killing and public execution. The pre-campaign mission determined that the killing of Jews, Red Army political soldiers (NKVD and political commissars) and local political officials, was to bring about the conditions for both Lebensraum and the eradication of internal resistance to German rule. The reckless use of killing as a means to engendering social control was not without some form of logic. It was widely believed that the Soviet Union would collapse as a 'house of cards' and that therefore the German conqueror would only have to cope with the absorption of the occupied territories. In this sense, the policy was a pre-emptive internal security strike similar to the Schlieffen Plan, which had also called for the eradication of potential resistance.<sup>79</sup> However, unlike that plan, Barbarossa called for the immediate eradication of potential political and racial enemies, irrational as this might seem today. Hence, so-called mopping up operations took on the appearance of anti-partisan or counter-insurgency operations. Once the Russian people began to comprehend where these Germans methods were leading, resistance began to harden. Finally, localised Russian army breakthroughs also contributed to a general air of uncertainty amongst the German leadership into how the campaign was developing.

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<sup>78</sup> Ruth Bettina Birn, 'Two kinds of reality: Case studies on Anti-Partisan Warfare during the Eastern Campaign', in Bernd Wegner, *From Peace to War: Germany, Soviet Russia and the World, 1939-1941*, (Oxford, 1997), p284.

<sup>79</sup> There were other parallels to the First World War and the eastern front. Major-General Gemp had called the mopping up operations against stragglers of the Tsarist Russian Army *Bandenbekämpfung*.

The German security policy was also directed toward the interests of senior figures of the regime. Richard Overy has identified Göring's concept of occupation and its exploitation:

The Nazi apparatus under Goering's control was strongly imperialist. The development of a Nazi New Order in Europe was a policy of the highest priority. Nazi imperialism obeyed the more literal view of empire; formal military and political power exercised over conquered or dependant peoples.<sup>80</sup>

In July 1941, Hermann Göring ordered the clearing of the forests of Białowieża. The order was passed from the Army-Group Centre Rear Area commander to Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski. The order called for the deployment of the 309<sup>th</sup> Police Battalion and the 350<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment to conclude the work. This was the beginning of a series of events that would terrorise the people of Białowieża, circumstances that both contrast and connect with German behaviour in 1917.<sup>81</sup> Since the last visit made by the Germans the area had been restocked with European Bison and was a flourishing nature reserve. Earlier in 1938 Sir Neville Henderson, ambassador to Berlin (1937-39), had noted that in Carinhall Göring had been trying to breed the same animal. The coincidence of Göring's request for an action highlights how his personal interests could affect decision-making in the clearing of areas.<sup>82</sup>

On the 14<sup>th</sup> July 1941, Bach-Zelewski began the preparations for the clean-up of the forest of Białowieża. Discussions involved "Generalforstmeisters" Göring's order (Bach-Zelewski's emphasis), von Schenckendorff and Colonel Montua of how this could be best achieved. The Cycle Battalion was mentioned which at the time was dealing with plunderers in Białystok.<sup>83</sup> The Germans came back to the area of Białowieża not merely with the intention of economic exploitation as in the First World War but with ideas of resettlement and killing. There have been two studies of the 322<sup>nd</sup> Police Cycle battalion conducting killing operations in the period 9<sup>th</sup> June to 1<sup>st</sup> September 1941.<sup>84</sup> It was part of Polizei-Regiment Russia Centre (Russland-Mitte), the most important unit in the security operations of HSSPF Russland-Mitte, the SS chief in

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<sup>80</sup> Overy, 1984, p107.

<sup>81</sup> BA MA, RH 26-221/12a,

<sup>82</sup> Henderson, 1940, p86.

<sup>83</sup> TVDB, p 4, dated 14<sup>th</sup> July 1941.

<sup>84</sup> Klee, 1988, see also Konrad Kwiet, 'From the Diary of a Killing Unit', in John Milful (ed), *Why Germany? National Socialist Anti-Semitism and the European Context*, (Oxford, 1993), pp75-91.

the rear-area of Army Group Centre). The battalion had been under training in Vienna when on the 16<sup>th</sup> April 1941 it was detailed for operations east. It gradually moved to Warsaw. According to Kwiet, the battalion was led by a major, with 12 officers, 1 medical officer, 5 administrators, 104 non commissioned officers and 435 policemen. The age group of the men was between the classes of 1908 and 1912, with the majority of the men coming from Austria and Germany. They had been trained in the use of weapons, political indoctrination and as Kwiet notes, 'the hunting of the 'enemy' was rehearsed.'<sup>85</sup> The battalion reached Bialystok on the 7<sup>th</sup> July 1941, but they were not the first police forces to have passed through the area and sometime later deployed into the Białowieża forests. They then proceeded to conduct the clearance of villages and the evacuation of inhabitants. There was an incident of local resistance on the 2<sup>nd</sup> August where they executed the ringleaders and about 100 suspects; the battalion was then ordered to eradicate the Jews of Białowieża.

The record of actions handled by the KSRFSS over the period 1<sup>st</sup> July-31<sup>st</sup> December 1941 highlight a steady stream of partisans being killed or captured. The single largest number killed on one-day was 94 on the 4<sup>th</sup> November 1941.<sup>86</sup> The largest number captured was 150 on the 5<sup>th</sup> October 1941.<sup>87</sup> The early actions of the 1<sup>st</sup> SS-Infantry Brigade have survived for the period 27<sup>th</sup> July to 21<sup>st</sup> November 1941. From the 27-30<sup>th</sup> July 1941, under the command of SS-Gruppenführer Jeckeln<sup>88</sup>, they recorded 800 Jews (aged 16-60) and 49 bandits (Freischärler) killed.<sup>89</sup> In the following month the same formation killed 1,385 Jews and one partisan in three days (3-6<sup>th</sup> August 1941).<sup>90</sup> The next week the brigade killed as many as 265 Jews per day and on the 6<sup>th</sup> September they had killed 734 Jews. The largest number of casualties recorded on one day was 13 killed and 43 wounded. Other security problems included a shooting in a concentration camp as Russians tried to escape on the 12<sup>th</sup> November 1941. It led to the shooting of 50 prisoners. Meanwhile across this time period there was a constant stream of death sentences of prisoners.

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid, p77.

<sup>86</sup> Unsere Ehre Heist Treue, 1965, p29.

<sup>87</sup> Unsere Ehre Heist Treue, 1965, p56.

<sup>88</sup> Christian Gerlach, 'The Wannsee Conference, the fate of the German Jews, and Hitler's decision in principle to exterminate all European Jews', in Omer Bartov (ed), *The Holocaust; Origins, Implementation, Aftermath*, (London, 2000), p112.

<sup>89</sup> Unsere Ehre Heist Treue, 1965, p105.

<sup>90</sup> Unsere Ehre Heist Treue, 1965, p108.

Christopher Browning maintains the opinion that in these early days of the Russian campaign, the Nazis used anti-partisan warfare as a cloak for genocide. With the control of the press, media and communications, one might ask from whom the Nazis were cloaking these actions. Many leading scholars have subjected Bach-Zelewski's activities to considerable examination, especially in July 1941. A Russian counter-attack in July 1941, behind the area of Army Group Centre, caused concern for the German command.<sup>91</sup> Bach-Zelewski was still working in the area of Białowieża at the time and became involved in the blocking operation. Both Philippe Burrin<sup>92</sup> and Browning referred to these two police battalions, the 316<sup>th</sup> and 322<sup>nd</sup>, both of which marched into Białystok in July 1941.<sup>93</sup> These units plundered property and killed Jews and Soviet Commissars. Bach-Zelewski later honoured the battalion commanders with a dinner in the company of Daluge and Himmler. This seemed to trigger the ideological fervour of Colonel Montua, the police commander when he issued an order for the following day:

By order of the HSSPF (Bach-Zelewski)... all male Jews between 17 and 45 convicted as plunderers are to be shot according to martial law. The shootings are to take place away from cities, villages and thoroughfares. The graves are to be levelled in such a way that no pilgrimage site can arise. I forbid photographing and the permitting of spectators at the executions. Executions and grave sites are not to be made known. The battalion and company commanders are especially to provide for the spiritual care of the men who participate in this action. The impressions of the day are to be blotted out through the holding of social events in the evenings. Furthermore the men are to be instructed continuously about the political necessity of the measures.<sup>94</sup>

On the 20<sup>th</sup> July, von dem Bach was given command of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> SS-Cavalry Regiments directly by Himmler to combat the increasing problems in the Pripet Marshes.<sup>95</sup> Later that month, Bach-Zelewski was reported to be working in the area of the KSRFSS on the 28<sup>th</sup> July 1941, in or around the Pripet Marshes, which his diary

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<sup>91</sup> TVDB.

<sup>92</sup> Philippe Burrin, *Hitler and the Jews: The Genesis of the Holocaust*, (London, 1994).

<sup>93</sup> Browning, 1998, quoted from Yad Vasham Archive, Jerusalem; 0-53/127/53, (war diary Police Battalion 322, 23.7.1941), pp437-8.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, quoted from , YVA, 0-53/128/219 (order of Colonel Montua, 11<sup>th</sup> July 1944), page also see Police Battalion 322 Landgericht Freiburg, judgement 1 AK 1/63, pp437-8.

<sup>95</sup> TVDB, p4.

confirmed.<sup>96</sup> On that day, the police battalions again came under Bach-Zelewski's direct authority and further killing of Jews took place in Minsk.

The major operation in the Pripet Marshes began at the end of July and lasted into the first week of August. On the 1<sup>st</sup> August 1941, the commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SS Cavalry Brigade received a radio message from Himmler instructing him to shoot the Jewish women in the marshes.<sup>97</sup> In what became a remarkably similar episode to that following the Battle of the Waterberg when von Trotha drove the Herero into the ravaging conditions of the desert, Himmler ordered that the SS-cavalrymen drive the Jews into the marshes to drown. On the 7<sup>th</sup> August, Bach-Zelewski sent the following message to Himmler, which unbeknown to the Germans was intercepted and decoded by British intelligence:

In addition to the last report, some missed men were exterminated... [corrupted]...1,800 Russians under a General....[corrupted]....they were counted. The population of Pazyc [Jasyl] left their houses, evacuated by the 1st company of the 316th [Police Battalion]. The SS Cavalry Brigade up to today [7th August] 3,600 executed, the complete number executed is 7,819. The number is over 30,000 in my area.<sup>98</sup>

On the 18<sup>th</sup> August, Bach-Zelewski sent the following message to his HSSPF colleague in Posen, 'I hope Lange will come personally when he is free to offer me his services. I want Lange to show me the procedure personally.'<sup>99</sup> In August Daluge and Bach-Zelewski met up again to discuss further actions and on the 1<sup>st</sup> September they occupied the Minsk Ghetto and proceeded to murder 900 Jews. All this time units of the KSRFSS were committing killing operations in the Pripet marshes, essentially trying to use the natural terrain to drown the Jews. In October 1941 Bach-Zelewski moved into Mogilev where a further 2,208 Jews were murdered. His movements over the period July-

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<sup>96</sup> TVDB, pp5-6.

<sup>97</sup> Staatsanwaltschaft dem Landgericht Braunschweig, Schwurgerichtsanklage gegen Angehörige des SS-Kav.Reg.2 (Erschiessung von Juden im Gebiet der Pinsker-Sümpfe August 1941, (1963). The case has also been mentioned in Birn, *Two kinds of reality*, *op cit*, pp277-292.

<sup>98</sup> PRO HW 16/45, 7.8.41, GPD 316, item 24, to RFSS Pers, Kdostab RFSS Chef Orpo, from HSSPF Russland Mitte. Thanks go to Nick Terry of Kings College (London), for the use of the PRO references in this chapter.

<sup>99</sup> PRO HW 16/32, 18.8.41, GPD 326 No.2 Traffic, to HSSPF Posen. SS-Hauptsturmführer Herbert Lange had been in charge of the Euthanasia gas vans since 1940. See N&P, volume 3, *ibid*, pp1138-1139 and Burleigh, Michael and Wippermann, Wolfgang, *The Racial State: Germany 1933-45*, (Cambridge, 1991), p102, who state that 145,000 Jews were killed by this method after December 1941.

November 1941 are listed in Table 10 below, and several major centres can be found in map 2 on page 356.

**Table 10: Bach-Zelewski's operational movements (July-November 1941)<sup>100</sup>**

JULY		AUG		SEPT		OCTOBER		NOV	
1	Bialystok	2	Pripet	3	Minsk	4	Vitebsk	5	Mogilev
8	Warsaw	10	Baranowicze	5	Turov	5	Toropets	9	Mogilev
10	Bialystok	14	Minsk	6	Minsk	6	Mogilev	12	Smolensk
12	Grodno	17	Breslau	8	Mosyr	13	Sick – Mogilev	13	Berlin
18	Pripet	19	Baranowicze	13	Choiniki	14	Sick	14	Breslau
30	Receives Storch	20	Turov	16	Mogilev	16	Toropets	18	Berlin
31	HSSPF	22	Starye Dorogi	17	Smolensk	17	Cholm	27	Warsaw
	staff	23	Pinsk	24-26	Training	18	Vitebsk	28	Mogilev
	still in	24	Baranowice	29	Pripet	27	Mogilev	30	Smolensk
	Breslau	25	Bialowies (Białowieża)			30	Riga		
		26	Mogilev						
		27	Starobin						
		30	Minsk						

Bach-Zelewski's actions alone do not explain his role. The HSSPFs in the North and South of Russia formed permanent structures of administration. There was a noticeable absence of the erection of a similar SS administration under HSSPF Russland-Mitte. An SS administration centre was opened in Saratow under Walter Schimana in August but was closed down by November 1941. Bach-Zelewski's links with the army were certainly very strong. His diaries and the work of other historians confirm the connections with von Schenckendorff. The patterns of his movements were irregular and responsive to the overall situation. His presence in these places precipitated killing actions. While his movements were confined to the territories falling under HSSPF Russland-Mitte, this was also an area of significant Jewish communities.

## VII. Summary

Anti-partisan warfare should not be seen in isolation as a problem of combating a specific enemy. On the contrary, it is an integral part of the war of annihilation and exploitation that was the campaign against the Soviet Union. The population of the German occupied Eastern territories were to be racially sorted – those considered inferior were to be wiped out, while the rest to be repressed and turned into cheap, unskilled slave labourers. Large-scale resettlement campaigns were to create space for the Germans to move into. Seen in this light, the 'anti-partisan' measures are nothing unusual –

<sup>100</sup>TVDB, following the collection of his Fiesler Storch reconnaissance aeroplane on the 30 July his movements were made more flexible as the rest of the year shows. Also, note the training programme in September, which will become an important subject in the chapter on manpower.



killing of suspects, the destruction of whole villages, nor the forced relocation of their inhabitants.<sup>101</sup>

Between 1939 and 1942 the SS leadership realised the potential of the concept of the Staatsschutzkorps as a militarized national security force. At the same time the correlation of genocide and security has been identified as fundamental to Nazi planning. The outcome was pre-emptive strike against armed opposition, and in the case of the Jews, racial enemies. It was also employed against political enemies as seen in the routine killing of the Red Army's political commissars. The decision by the Nazis to commence ethnic cleansing of Jews before the decision for mass extermination and genocide also raises questions about Bach-Zelewski's role in the first year of the Russian campaign. It appears most likely that Himmler assigned Bach-Zelewski the job of overseeing the killing programme in the central sector of the eastern front. In return Bach-Zelewski proved to be highly effective in ensuring that the momentum of killing was maintained. He also seemed to have been a motivating force behind his men, sustaining their mobility, and shuffling them from task to task. Thus by the summer of 1942, all the institutional factors that would play key positions in *Bandenbekämpfung* were already in place.

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<sup>101</sup> Birn, 1997, p288.

### **Chapter Four: Bandenbekämpfung**

There must be no German in the area threatened by bandits who is not engaged, actively or passively, in the fight against them.<sup>1</sup>

Bandenbekämpfung was introduced in the watershed year of 1942. The German defeats at Stalingrad and El Alemein have become symbolic of the turn of events.<sup>2</sup> Even the Nazis recognised 1942 as the year of decision. In December 1941, Hitler had declared war on the USA just as his final attack on Moscow ground down to an exhausted halt. The Nazi empire by then stretched from Brest in France to the gates of Moscow, seemingly impenetrable. Within the inner circles of the regime however, there was considerable concern. Rather than providing the Germans with unlimited resources, Lebensraum in the east was proving too costly to both manage and secure. Hitler had already had to compromise his racial prejudices to enable the recruitment of a colonial style police force. The institutionalised plundering of the occupied territories of Russia was extended further as front line forces were under pressure to plunder to survive as the transportation system failed to bring forward the supplies those German industries were hard pressed to produce. The call for more manpower came from all quarters. Nazi and military organisations alike were stretched and competed for all available manpower. This was the critical year of the war and Hitler was fully aware of it as the spectre of collapse as in 1917-1919 raised fears among leading members of the regime.

In January 1942, the Wannsee Conference formalised the Endlösung (Final Solution), the state sponsored industrial genocide of the Jews. This was also the year that led modern warfare into what Francis Lieber and others had tried to prevent, namely unrestricted warfare within the occupation zones. Between 1939 and 1942, the belligerents had already been conducting their own interpretations of warfare. Germany had paid little credence to the laws of war in its application of mechanised (mobile) race war genocide, culminating in the events discussed in chapter three. In an effort to hit back the British had turned to covert operations, which were an open breach of the laws of warfare. This changing character of warfare included unrestricted bombing of cities, widespread use of sabotage, 'cloak and dagger' activities and the extension of military operations deep into occupied terrain. When in 1942, Hitler made his general call to

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<sup>1</sup> Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Hitler's War Directives 1939-1945*, (London, 1960), p202.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Overy, *Why the Allies Won*, (London, 1995), p80.

arms, quoted above, typical of the commitment demanded from societies in a state of total war. The impact of the actions of the allied special forces (such as the commandos) upon the Nazi regime has remained subject to conjecture rather than objective empirical research.<sup>3</sup> Their impact on the increasing insurgency within the occupied territories and the Nazi response will also be examined in this chapter.

## **I. Europe Ablaze (1940-1942)**

[T]he gangster-warrior elites born of the Second World War ran about the rear areas of the enemy, destroying, confusing, and avoiding a fair fight whenever possible. "Mobs for jobs", British called them. Private armies. Not soldiers, really. Nor civilians. Wore what they liked; developed their own vehicles and tactics. Drove higher commanders and the MPs wild. And their leaders usually had enough influence to keep them free of control by higher command. In that sense, they were guerrillas in uniform. The enemy was held in place in conventional warfare by the parent force and then jabbed and pinched until he bled from a thousand wounds.<sup>4</sup>

The Soviet partisans were not only reason for the imposition of Bandenbekämpfung. Winston Churchill, following the collapse of France in 1940, called for clandestine forces and resistance to be joined in a drive to 'set Europe ablaze'. In 1940, the British had established the Combined Operations Executive.<sup>5</sup> Its purpose was to coordinate the armed forces in operations against German occupied Europe. In the same year the Special Operations Executive (SOE) was created to conduct acts of sabotage and espionage. In 1941, Churchill agreed to the founding of the Commandos, to be employed in raids against German held coastal sites, in 'hit and run' attacks. Churchill named them after the Boer Commandos, recalling his experiences from that earlier war, and he expected them to be equally as effective against the Germans.<sup>6</sup> The shock of commando missions at Bruneval and St.Nazaire (27-28<sup>th</sup> March 1942), 'hit and run' raids and the major test of the German coastal defences at Dieppe (18-19 August 1942) were, alongside the SOE covert operations, were the cause of exasperation for the Nazi leadership. Throughout Europe the growth in resistance movements, provided with

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<sup>3</sup> Rab Bennett, *Under the Shadow of the Swastika: the moral dilemmas of resistance and collaboration in Hitler's Europe*, (London, 1999).

<sup>4</sup> Roger A. Beaumont, *Military Elites*, (London, 1976), pp44-45.

<sup>5</sup> David Fraser, *And we shall shock them: The British Army in the Second World War*, (London, 1983), pp90-96, also discussed by John W. Gordon, 'Wingate', in John Keegan (ed), *Churchill's Generals*, (London, 1991), p 283.

<sup>6</sup> Stephen Badsey, entry on the 'Commandos', in Richard Holmes (ed), *The Oxford Companion to Military History*, (Oxford, 2001), pp213-214. Badsey noticed that the average size of Commando battalion was 400 strong.

support by the British, led to the increase in undercover operations. Effectively, by 1942, Churchill had woven a web of resistance movements throughout Europe that was undermining German occupation authority. The growing seriousness of this situation had led Reinhard Heydrich and members of the SS security service to begin to reassess their policies.<sup>7</sup>

The conflict within the occupied countries of Western Europe was also a battle between resistance (supported by the allies) and collaboration (demanded by the Nazis). In France, following the defeat in 1940 and up to the end of 1943, there was a fine line drawn between collaboration and resistance. Petain's Vichy France encouraged Frenchmen to join the German Wehrmacht and later the SS. Belgium was similarly divided between would-be resisters and Leon Degrelle's Rexist (Catholic) Party.<sup>8</sup> In Holland collaboration had seen Dutchmen join the SS and participate among the leading strike units during Barbarossa; while Danish volunteers had played a significant part in the KSRFSS organisation. Norway had been turned into a militarized zone with Kriegsmarine (German Navy) convoy raiders, Nazi heavy water science projects, and, Luftwaffe radar and communications operations. Norwegian resistance remained a thorn in the side of the Germans, aided by British commando operations and supply drops of weapons from Britain. It was therefore in British interests to help undermine and support all challenges to German authority.

The Balkans and in particular Yugoslavia turned into a major problem area for the Germans and Italians. In 1942, the Balkans were the direct responsibility of the German army rather than the SS. However, this was a territory racked by civil-war as much as it suffered from the axis occupation. The rivalry between Tito and Mihailović matched their hatred for the Germans and Italians. Both of them planned attacks against the occupiers although the Mihailović joined the axis powers to attack Tito's partisans.<sup>9</sup> Initially the Germans were forced to share authority with the Italians in the Balkans. This partnership was unable to find the means of forming a unified command system to overcome the partisans.<sup>10</sup> The territorial conditions in the Balkans dictated the need for

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<sup>7</sup> The history of the British special forces and the resistance has been handled by a number of scholars including MRD Foot, *Resistance: European Resistance to Nazism 1940-45*, (London, 1976).

<sup>8</sup> Conway, M., *The Rexist movement in Belgium 1940-1944*, D.Phil., (Oxford, 1989).

<sup>9</sup> Simon Trew, *Britain Mihailović and the Chetniks*, (London, 1998). The British initially tried to support Mihailović but eventually supported Tito.

<sup>10</sup> Paul N. Hehn, *The German Struggle against Yugoslav Guerrillas in World War II: German counter-*

specialist troops such as mountain regiments, unavailable following once the German invasion of Soviet Russia.<sup>11</sup> With the proximity to both the war in the desert and the Mediterranean, the British also had an interest in supporting Germany's opponents. Eventually, after some double-dealing between the two Yugoslavian pretenders, Britain finally opted for Tito.<sup>12</sup>

In Poland there had been a steep growth in serious attacks and incidents caused by resistance fighters as well as criminal gangs. The latter had allegiance only to themselves. Most of the attacks on the Germans came from resistors based in the large Polish forests.<sup>13</sup> David Mountfield noted that incidents of resistance began to emerge in Poland from 1940, gradually this grew into the regular crippling of steam locomotives and the use of glass bombs to destroy Luftwaffe aircraft.<sup>14</sup> The Germans faced problems throughout 1942; SS-Obergruppenführer Krüger the HSSPF of the General-Government regularly reported to Himmler over an increasing number of incidents. On the 30<sup>th</sup> December 1942, Krüger radioed a report of an incident near an SS guard point at Łazczerw involving over 60 bandits trying to smuggle contraband. He was forced to employ a battalion of the 25<sup>th</sup> SS-Police Regiment to combat the band.<sup>15</sup> A month earlier he had reported that bandit activities had spread amongst the Jewish labour camps and that those too difficult to guard had been closed and the inmates sent to a central camp.<sup>16</sup> A particular problem facing the Germans was assassination, a permanent threat to all Nazi officials in occupied Poland.<sup>17</sup> In 1941 the President of the Katowice court had warned the regime against the potential of a serious outbreak of trouble within Poland:

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*insurgency in Yugoslavia 1941-1943*, (New York, 1979).

<sup>11</sup> US Army, CMH, *German anti-guerrilla operations in the Balkans (1941-1944)*, (Washington DC, 1954). See chapter five and the SS organisation behind the raising of an SS-mountain division in Yugoslavia.

<sup>12</sup> This region also saw the gradual upsurge of resistance movements in Greece, which has been fully covered in Mark Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece: The Experience of Occupation 1941-44*, (Yale, 1995).

<sup>13</sup> NA, T580, Daluge papers, numerous incidents of banditry in the Polish forests in 1940, handled by the Gendarmerie.

<sup>14</sup> David Mountfield, *The Partisans*, (London, 1979), pp41-43..

<sup>15</sup> NA, T175, roll 81, frame 2601526, Funkspruch 30th December 1942 and subsequent correspondence.

<sup>16</sup> NA, T175, roll 81, frame 2601974 report 17<sup>th</sup> November 1942. It is difficult to assess whether this was a real response to the rising bandit problems or whether it was camouflaged language for the genocide of the Jews.

<sup>17</sup> These assassinations were indiscriminate and included several senior members of the occupation and many policemen. The Germans exacted severe reprisals with every incident. One particular example was SS-Brigadeführer Franz Kutschera (SSPF Warsaw). He was killed by Polish partisans in February 1944. He was trained under Bach-Zelewski in the Bandenkampfverbände and was destined to achieve the highest ranks of the SS.

A further worsening of the situation is to be counted on if the war should last longer; for the Poles are said to be fanatically convinced of the victory of the Western countries and of a resurrection of their country, and risk everything which does not seem to be punishable by death. The terrorist activity of the last few months does not appear to leave the Reich Germans in the Eastern occupied districts unimperilled. The slightest military set back could result in immediate danger due to the growing and immediate terrorist readiness of the anti-German organizations.<sup>18</sup>

## II. The German Response

The initial phases of the German attack on Russia had concluded with the Red Army's counter-attacks, which had contributed to preventing Moscow from being captured. The winter of 1941-42, one of the severest climatically in Russian history, further undermined the German Army's cohesion. The failure to fulfil the promise of Lebensraum was a deep frustration to Hitler. With the increase in partisan activity, the general feeling among members of the German high command, was that the Soviets were a lot harder than had been expected, but they still believed in total victory. In terms of grand strategy, Hitler chose to extend his occupation of Russia by directing the offensive toward areas rich in raw materials – the Caucasus. Operation Blue, set to begin in June 1942, was directed toward the capture of territory in southern Russia, including the rich oilfields and other sources of raw materials. This plan of attack, contained many political objectives, however, it was an economically directed offensive. Hitler was in effect trying to ensure Germany had the resources to continue to prosecute a long and protracted war.

This economic perspective further impinged upon Hitler's decisions regarding the occupied zones and internal security.<sup>19</sup> In March voices of concern began to be heard over the conduct of the war against the partisans. On the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1942, the army's influential General Max von Schenckendorff protested that he no longer had the resources to continue the fight against the partisans.<sup>20</sup> He offered his opinions on the security situation in a report entitled 'proposals for the liquidation of the partisans'. He was looking to strike a balance within security policy, between handling the population

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<sup>18</sup> IWM, IMT 674-PS, letter from Dr. Heimer President of the High Court of Kattowitz to the Reich Ministry of Justice, Executions by the police and expediting of penal procedures without order.

<sup>19</sup> William Carr, *Arms Autarky and Aggression, A Study in German Foreign Policy, 1933-1939*, (Southampton, 1972).

<sup>20</sup> BA MA, RH 22/230, Vorschläge zur Vernichtung der Partisanen. Schenckendorff still commanded the rear area of Army Group Centre, but his forces had been denuded to ease the loss of manpower in the front lines.

for purposes of exploitation of the land and the eradication of the partisans. It was not just a report on military efficiency but also about economic expediency. In May 1942, Schenckendorff went further stating, 'no longer in control of the situation and that everything built up over the last few months had been destroyed.'<sup>21</sup> It is certain that the combination of these difficulties profoundly affected Hitler's appreciation of the general situation. As such in terms of security, he appears to have decided upon a more rational policy.

Strong economic measures were also taking shape in German domestic policy.<sup>22</sup> The combination of conscription, expansion of industry and the limited availability of women (due to Hitler's opinion that they should remain at home) had contributed to considerable labour shortages. The control of Nazi economic policy had been handed over to Albert Speer and Gauleiter Fritz Sauckel who, were allowed a free hand in raising large numbers of foreign volunteer and forced labour. The drive toward labour mobilisation was to play a considerable part in the later operational direction of Bandenbekämpfung. Attention remained on the Jews. Since the beginning of January 1942, Himmler's responsibilities regarding the final extermination of the Jews had been concluded at the Wannsee conference. The process of rounding up all Jews from the Reich and occupied territories, led to their incarceration in concentration camps, mainly in Poland. This policy actually eased the manpower pressures upon the SS-Police establishment, releasing battalions for security duties in the east. The preparations for the genocide of the Jewish people was noted in his diary Goebbels:

Not much will remain of the Jews. About 60 per cent will have to be liquidated; only about 40 per cent can be used for slave labour...The former Gauleiter of Vienna [SS-Obergruppenführer Odilo Globocnik], who is to carry out this measure, is doing it with considerable circumspection and in a way that does not attract too much attention. Though the judgement now being visited upon the Jews is barbaric, they fully deserve it... The ghettos that will be emptied in the cities of the General Government will now be refilled with Jews thrown out of the Reich. This process will be repeated

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<sup>21</sup> Theo Schulte, 'The German army and National Socialist occupation policies in the occupied areas of the Soviet Union 1941-43,' PhD, University of Warwick, (1987), p74.

<sup>22</sup> N&P, volume 3. At this same time Nazi domestic policy-making was also directed toward common criminals 'languishing' (according to Hitler) within German jails. He wanted criminal punishment and correction, to provide a taste of the suffering that had fallen on the soldiers on the eastern front. A sentence was introduced in the summer of 1942 on the principle of working them to death.

from time to time.<sup>23</sup>

The increase in foreign police manpower had further eased the SS-Police manpower situation. Lucy Dawidowicz noticed that in the first six months of 1942, even members of the Jewish Police were being selected for extermination:

Before long, German terror set in motion a process of negative selection among Jewish Police, eliminating the soft and irreproachable, leaving those who, with a corroded instinct for self-preservation were or had become callous and ruthless, tenacious in their will to perform the duties imposed on them.<sup>24</sup>

This was a further sign that the SS expedient of employing foreigners had become highly effective. The work of Christopher Browning has isolated this time period as central in the genocide of the Jews. He pointed out that in the twelve months after March 1942; the majority of the Jewish victims were killed:

In mid-March 1942, 75 to 80 percent of all victims of the Holocaust were still alive, while 20 to 25 percent had perished. A mere eleven months later, in mid February 1943, the percentages were exactly the reverse.<sup>25</sup>

It is with all these factors in mind that we can point out that Himmler was working toward forming a new responsibility, from the spring of 1942. Raul Hilberg identified this period in which the police embraced a dual mission – genocide and security through counter-insurgency duties. He noticed that during the second wave of shootings in the east, in the spring of 1942, many of those units deployed were also assigned to anti-partisan duties. Hilberg suggested there was the potential for camouflaged killing of the Jews under the pretence of security duties:

These units became “anti-partisan formations” for the duration of such an assignment. The device is of interest because, in the guise of anti-partisan activity, the units killed thousands of Jews in woods and in the swamps.<sup>26</sup>

Perhaps Hilberg is correct, but there is also now mounting evidence to suggest Himmler was seeking a more significant role in the crusade in the east.

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<sup>23</sup> Josef Goebbels, *The Goebbels Diaries*, (London, 1948), 27<sup>th</sup> March 1942, pp102-103.

<sup>24</sup> Dawidowicz, 1990, pp289-290.

<sup>25</sup> Browning, 1998, pXV.

<sup>26</sup> Hilberg, 1985, p140.



### Assassination of Reinhard Heydrich

From the German perspective the chain of events that led to the assassination of Heydrich began on or about the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1942. On that day, Himmler and Heydrich had lunch and discussed the increasing problems of allied covert operations, following the discovery of parachute supply drops into Czechoslovakia.<sup>27</sup> Three days later, on the 6<sup>th</sup> May, Himmler was involved in discussions over the training of police officers in the light of these covert activities, and especially in the use of flare pistols and hand-grenades. On the 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> May, the question of 'English' sabotage materials cropped up again in discussions with Heydrich. They were especially interested in the increase in sabotage activities in Western Europe, and Czechoslovakia.<sup>28</sup>

On the 27<sup>th</sup> May, the day of the assassination, Himmler's routine began as usual, with his daily telephone call with Kurt Daluge, at 10.30am. They discussed Partisanenbekämpfung amongst several other subjects. At 11.30am Karl Frank, an SS Obergruppenführer and State Secretary in the Prague administration, informed Himmler by telephone of the assassination attempt on Heydrich. Himmler insisted that Frank inform Hitler personally at 12.15pm. He then ordered Karl Wolff to organise the immediate travel arrangements of the leading Nazi physician, Professor Gebhardt, to attend to Heydrich. Himmler went to lunch with Hitler at 1.00pm. During the luncheon they discussed at least twelve issues, one of which was Hitler's proposal to send Bach-Zelewski to deal with the Czech resistance. Himmler persuaded him otherwise, suggesting that Bach-Zelewski's work in Russia was far too valuable. From then on Himmler met with Hitler daily, and kept in touch with Prague as to Heydrich's condition.<sup>29</sup>

Churchill had called for Europe to be "set ablaze". Immediately upon Heydrich's death the SS imposed terror on Czechoslovakia. In a systematic rampage, they destroyed two villages, killed the adult inhabitants, sent the children to camps, and even shot family pets.<sup>30</sup> The actions of the SOE, Churchill and the Czech government in exile

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<sup>27</sup> DKHH, p415.

<sup>28</sup> DKHH, pages 429 and 433.

<sup>29</sup> DKHH, pp437-484.

<sup>30</sup> There is considerable literature on the assassination and Heydrich, including John Bradley, *Lidice: sacrificial village*, (USA, 1972), Richard Livingstone, 'A Final Lesson: The Destruction of Lidice', Purnell's, *History of the Second World War*, pp1024-1029, and Günter Deschner, *Reinhard Heydrich. Statthalter der totalen Macht*, (München, 1980),

had paved the way for Hitler to reinterpret the laws of war. The local circumstances were tragic. In the wider perspective, the Nazis now worked toward major changes in the direction of security policy. David Mountfield suggested the attack had been a propaganda stunt intended to fire the Czech resistance.<sup>31</sup> For MRD Foot this moment in the history of the SOE has been difficult to come to terms with. In his important work on the resistance, Foot chose not to approve of assassination. 'It is doubtful whether the one killing of a leading Nazi that the resistance did bring off, the death of Reinhard Heydrich, did much real good.'<sup>32</sup> Foot chose to overlook the gravity of this obvious disregard for the laws of war and its consequences; even if it was a decision made by the armies of democracy.

Another viewpoint, that has come to doubt the value of the assassination, is that of Rab Bennett's work on the moral dilemmas of collaboration and resistance. He identified the moral dilemmas behind this incident. In his opinion the assassination included the calculation that the Germans would commit grievous reprisals. He conceptualised this plan into what he termed the 'artificial stimulation' of resistance through the expectancy of atrocities. Bennett recognised that the assassination contributed to undermining the Nazis authority, though he acknowledged that after the war members of the SOE began to have doubts about its real worth as a resistance assignment. Lacking wider evidence Bennett relied on the immediate atrocities committed against the Czech people to illustrate the gravity of the killings. Bennett became caught up in the moral dichotomy of recognising that Heydrich probably deserved all he got; but was all the misery that followed worth it? He was unable to come to a satisfactory answer, but he placed doubt over the assassination's overall value.<sup>33</sup> During a funeral oration Kurt Daluege made a pointed reference to the Americans and British, identifying their encouragement of these methods, indicating that severe measures would follow.<sup>34</sup> Whether these comments were directed toward the Czech people specifically or to the wider occupied lands remains subject to conjecture. First and foremost it was a clear message to the allies that the Nazis intended to impose their interpretation of the laws of war, over the lands they occupied.

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<sup>31</sup> Mountfield, 1979, p29.

<sup>32</sup> Foot, 1976, p52.

<sup>33</sup> Rab Bennett, 1999, pp238-268.

<sup>34</sup> NA T580, roll 222, frame 09995, funeral oration by Kurt Daluege on behalf of Reinhard Heydrich, 7<sup>th</sup> June 1942.

### III. Bandenbekämpfung

Following Heydrich's funeral, events took a new twist as Himmler brought his management expertise to bear on the problem. On 6<sup>th</sup> June 1942, Himmler held an important dinner for the senior SS leaders, from the east, at the KSRFSS. The dinner opened at 8.00pm and lasted for about 4 hours. In attendance were Bach-Zelewski, Prützmann and Jeckeln. On July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1942, Himmler travelled to Rominten Heide to meet with Göring, to discuss security matters.<sup>35</sup> However, it was the luncheon of the 9<sup>th</sup> July that opened up the planning for what would lead to Bandenbekämpfung. The meeting included Kurt Daluge, Friedrich-Wilhelm Krüger (HSSPF General-government), Bach-Zelewski, Prützmann, Heinrich Müller (Chief of the Gestapo), Bruno Streckenbach,<sup>36</sup> Kurt Knoblauch, SS-Brigadeführer Carl Zenner (SSPF Weissruthenia), Odilo Globocnik (SSPF Lublin), Herbert Becker (BdO General-Government), Willi Bittrich (SS Cavalry Division commander since 1<sup>st</sup> June 1942), Generalleutnant Jedicke (BdO Ostland) and Dr. Erhard Schöngarth (BdS Krakau<sup>37</sup>). The meeting was representative of not only the leading personalities of SS security policy, but also the central characters behind the Staatsschutzkorps. For example, Jedicke was an experienced Wasserschutzpolizei officer; Kurt Knoblauch was the chief of staff of the KSRFSS, and, Willi Bittrich a senior Waffen-SS officer, fully experienced in combat. On the 27<sup>th</sup> July, Himmler's appointments diary referred to Bandenbekämpfung, but it had still not become official policy, later that day he discussed security with Franz Müller, a forestry and hunting specialist. On the 6<sup>th</sup> August, Himmler flew from Helsinki to Mogilev to meet with Bach-Zelewski and Walter Schimana. At that time the SS were conducting Operation Sumpffieber (Malaria) while Bach-Zelewski was coordinating Operation Adler (Eagle). They met for two hours then Himmler flew on to Zhitomir, concluding his on the spot observation of the security situation.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Coincidentally 15 days later a Luftwaffe unit discussed in chapter 10 departed for Bialowies.

<sup>36</sup> Bruno Streckenbach was born in 1902. He had been involved in the Freikorps, he was a member of the RSHA, Office I personnel, served in the Florian Geyer, and the 19th SS Division. Received the Knights Cross with Oak Leaves. Had led Einsatzgruppe I in Poland. Was a merchant and had average schooling, he spoke English and French. Captured by the Russians he remained there until 1955. He avoided justice in 1973 because he was too ill to stand trial, an early SS and party member he died in 1977.

<sup>37</sup> Dr. Erhard Schöngarth, NA SS Personnel File, and Krausnick, 1985, p157 and p204, had been an Einsatzgruppen leader.

<sup>38</sup> NA, IMT, 1113-PS, This is a partial translation of a report on an operation undertaken in 1942 and was organised by HSSPF Riga. The report outlined the equipment gathered from the successful operation

From the 31st July 1942, Himmler began to issue orders and guidelines on the correct use of acceptable terminology rather than partisan, such as bandit, franc-tireur or an illegal criminal.<sup>39</sup> In outlining his opinion, he stated that the Bolsheviks were trying to adopt the term 'partisan' as a normal branch of the armed services. Himmler declared this a Bolshevik plot conceived by a Jewish propaganda swindle. He added that criminals hiding behind the title partisan were in fact snipers (Heckenschütze), franc-tireurs, street robbers, and bandits. Time had come therefore, to formally report incidents using the terms *Banden*, *Banditen-Bekämpfung* or *Franktireur-Bekämpfung*. The publicity section of the SS, SS-Standarte 'Kurt Eggers', was ordered to make it their task of ensuring the importance of the terminology, throughout the organisation.<sup>40</sup> This led Himmler down the road to becoming the high priest and grand protector of the term 'Bandenbekämpfung'. He succeeded in making his terminology the official words for the campaign, and continued to write copious letters and memorandum about it. In a file memo entitled 'Thoughts on the word "Partisan"' Himmler once again restated his opinion, challenging the word through Nazi race doctrine:

Across Europe, and especially we Germans, now expose this propaganda swindle of the Bolshevik Untermenschen (sub-humans) and Jews. The word 'partisan' described the heroic and patriotic fighter who used ambush. The word 'Partisan' is therefore to us no longer used, these persons are to be called by what they reality are, snipers, franc-tireur, highway-robbers, footpads, and bandits. The official term to be used will be *Banden* and *Banditen-Bekämpfung*, no longer speak of them as *Franc-Tireur*.<sup>41</sup>

Himmler ordered a propaganda campaign to begin leafleting inhabitants of the east with threats, stating that Moscow's use of the term partisan was neither heroic nor patriotic. The leaflet stated that German soldiers would be ordered to shoot any persons who exposed themselves by supporting the partisans and allowing them into their homes. Villages were to be scourged of this problem. By institutionalising this terminology cult, Himmler was both building an esprit du corps within his troops and

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against 'Bandits'. The figures of casualties, 389 armed bandits were shot, 1274 suspicious persons sentenced and shot, 8350 Jews executed.

<sup>39</sup> NA, T175, role 74, frame 2591698, this order was actually issued while on a visit to Helsinki. The use of standard terminology began well before the 17<sup>th</sup> February 1942, when Himmler wrote a memo to one of his liaison officers, Major of Police Suchanek.

<sup>40</sup> NA, T175 role 74, frame 2591688, letter from the personal staff of the RFSS to SS-Standarte 'Kurt Eggers'.

<sup>41</sup> NA, T175, roll 74, frames 2591686-2591706, Gedanken über das Wort "Partisanen".

transforming the security mission into a crusade. Himmler had raised Bandenbekämpfung as the new weapon in National Socialism's historic mission, the destruction of Marxist-Bolshevism:

Bolshevism has managed to bring to life the so-called partisans, arming them to the service of the state. They are the same tactics used by the Comintern of 1917. With the concept of the partisan, Bolshevism tries to promote banditry to national status, raising the term bandit from the ambush to the level of freedom fighter and patriot...Up until now we have taken on this newly coined status by the Jewish-Bolshevik sub-humans, and fought to remove the partisans from within the population....The partisans are to be described and handled thus: bandits which fire their underhanded shots and commit their acts of sabotage as snipers, franc-tireurs and highway-robbers (Strassenräuber) then flee, hoping to very often encumber the innocent inhabitants of the country, will be held responsible for their deeds.<sup>42</sup>

On the 12<sup>th</sup> August 1942, Himmler issued Order No.65, which stated that on “psychological grounds” the word partisan could no longer be recognised. It had been idealised by Bolshevism and consequently for all future correspondence the word had to be replaced with Banditen or Frank-Tireur. Himmler went on to stress that it was important to establish the differences between the ‘quiet people’ and the ‘ambushers’ (Heckenschützen). That the “quiet people” had to be deterred from supporting these ambushers.<sup>43</sup> On the same day Himmler also issued Order No.66, which formed the outlines, for what would become the basic structure of the organisations involved in the forthcoming campaign.<sup>44</sup>

#### The Führer Directive No. 46

In recent months banditry in the East has assumed intolerable proportions, and threatens to become a serious danger to supplies for the front and to the economic exploitation of the country. By the beginning of winter these bandit gangs must be substantially exterminated, so that order may be restored behind the Eastern front and severe disadvantages to our winter operations avoided.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> NA, BDC documents (various sources) on Bandenbekämpfung.

<sup>43</sup> NA T175, roll 135, frames 22287909-12, Der Reichsführer-SS, Tgb. Ia 521/42, Kommando Nr 65, 12<sup>th</sup> August 1942.

<sup>44</sup> NA, T175, roll 135, frames 22287909-12, Der Reichsführer-SS, Tgb. Ia, 522/42, Kommando Nr.66, 12<sup>th</sup> August 1942.

<sup>45</sup> Walter Hubatsch, *Hitlers Weisungen für die Kriegführung 1939-1945: Dokumente des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht*, (Karl Müller Verlag, 1999). Hubatsch has published the main directive and the two amendments that were added later and discussed later in this chapter; refer to Hugh Trevor-Roper, 1960,

Himmler's efforts finally bore fruit, on the 18<sup>th</sup> August 1942, when Adolf Hitler issued his War Directive No. 46, *Richtlinien für die verstärkte Bekämpfung des Bandenunwesens im Osten*, (Instructions for Intensified Action against the Bands in the East). There had been several formal stages before the introduction of *Bandenbekämpfung*. The 'Barbarossa Directives' had included basic rules of engagement for combating guerrillas. This was followed by the decisions made at conferences on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> July 1941, that had also shaped an official policy. Since September 1941, the army had issued an almost continuous stream of orders and directives inducing the troops to eradicate the partisans. This new policy was much more comprehensive with formal principles of engagement, a defined command structure, a specified force structure, and prescribed spheres of competence. Significantly, considerable content was devoted to security rationalisation in the east, between the Wehrmacht and SS. In essence the army was directed toward winning the war, and the SS was responsible for all internal security, stretching from the Reich, through the eastern colonies and up to rear areas of the Operationsgebiet (front line area). Truman Anderson has described this as 'parallel jurisdiction' authority but it was much more about the twin pillars of security (SS and Wehrmacht), coordinating the success of *Lebensraum* in the east.<sup>46</sup>

The directive placed Himmler in the foremost position of responsibility for all matters of security. This was not without some irony; just over a year before, Himmler's authority in Russia had been the subject of discussion:

A longer discussion takes place concerning the jurisdiction of Reichsführer-SS; obviously at the same time the participants have in mind the jurisdiction of the Reichsmarschall. The Führer and the Reichsmarschall and others reiterate that Himmler was to have no greater jurisdiction than he had in Germany proper; but this (much) was absolutely necessary.<sup>47</sup>

The defining terms of this policy were founded upon Hitler's opening remarks and general principles:

Rapid, drastic, and active operations against the bandits by the co-ordination

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an English translation that correctly employs the term 'Banditry'; it is also recorded as the complete SS documentation on NA T175 Roll 140.

<sup>46</sup> Truman O. Anderson, 'Germans, Ukrainians and Jews: Ethnic Politics in Heeresgebiet Süd, June-December 1941', *War in History*, volume 7, number 3, July 2000, pp325-352.

<sup>47</sup> NA, IMT, L-221, *ibid*.

of all available forces of the Armed Forces, the SS, and Police which are suitable for the purpose...and...The concentration of all propaganda, economic, and political measures on the necessity of combating banditry.

Hitler had escalated the fight against banditry to a comparative level with that of the frontline fighting. It was placed to the fore of the overall war effort. It contained a six point mission statement for Bandenbekämpfung:

The following general principles will be borne in mind by all concerned in formulating military, police, and economic measures:

1. The fight against banditry is as much a matter of strategy as the fight against the enemy at the front. It will therefore be organised and carried out by the same staffs.
2. The destruction of the bandits calls for active operations and the most rigorous measures against all members of gangs or those guilty of supporting them. Operation orders for action against bandits will follow.
3. The confidence of the local population in German authority must be gained by handling them strictly but justly.
4. A necessary condition for the destruction of bandit gangs is the assurance to the local population of the minimum requirements of life. Should this fail, or - what is particularly important - should available supplies not be fairly distributed, the result will be that more recruits will join the bandits.
5. In this struggle against the bandits the co-operation of the local population is indispensable. Deserving persons should not be parsimoniously treated; rewards should be really attractive. On the other hand, reprisals for action in support of the bandits must be all the more severe.
6. Misplaced confidence in the native population, particularly in those working for the German authorities, must be strictly guarded against. Even though the majority of the population is opposed to the bandits, there are always spies to be reckoned with, whose task is to inform the bandits of all action contemplated against them.<sup>48</sup>

On the one hand Hitler recognised that local populations required a minimum standard of living, otherwise they themselves would join the partisans; but on the other, he cautioned his own forces from making misjudgements regarding the reliability of the same population. He believed the local populations were generally opposed to the partisans but he wanted the authorities to be wary of the existence of spies. These ideas were some what contradictory given the reliance the Germans had placed on

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<sup>48</sup> Trevor-Roper, 1960,

collaborators since 1941. The ‘stick and carrot’ approach to handling the civilians was clarified in point five. As a consequence of the implementation of this policy the German forces were granted considerable freedom of action. The Bandenverdächtige (suspect) became the central victim of this campaign. Anyone in the security zone could be declared a suspect and as a consequence be killed or enslaved without warning; this was the ‘sword of Damocles’ that was dangled over the heads of Soviet citizenry. The questions concerning manpower will be discussed in chapter five.

#### Heinrich Himmler: the First Chef der Bandenkampfverbände

The Command Structure of the directive placed Heinrich Himmler as responsible for all security. It also placed him within a prominent position to the overall war effort. The KSRFSS became the central clearing point for the collection and evaluation of all intelligence concerning ‘banditry’. The armed forces were expected to assist Himmler’s staffing requirements, with supplies and communications facilities to aid him in his work. The process of restructuring also raised to prominence the HSSPF leaders in the east. Bach-Zelewski later stated that during this anti-bandit campaign he was always under the leadership of the army. This was not the case after August 1942 when the HSSPF were given greater freedom of action, he remained under Himmler’s authority. While the ‘closest liaison’ was expected between the HSSPF and Wehrmacht commanders, and this indeed occurred, there was little suggestion of subordination of one organisation over another. By December 1942, Himmler had formed and organised a staff system to enable the liaison between both the Wehrmacht and the SS.

Once Heinrich Himmler became Chef der Bandenkampfverbände (Chief of the anti-Bandit organisation) he did not conduct any operations personally, nor did he lead any actions in the field. Since 1918, Himmler had led a life of political activism beginning with the Freikorps, early membership of the Nazi party, participation in the Munich putsch, a duplicitous role in the putsch against Ernst Röhm in 1934, taken command of the police in 1936, built the SS into a powerfully armed force, developed the concentration camp system into both an economic and extermination industry, and, was unquestionably loyal to Hitler. During this same time he had qualified for a degree from a technical university, married with a child, moved into business, formed his own business and taken on an affair with one of his secretaries. From 1942, he was



responsible for the extermination of Jews; the racial resettlement programmes; control of internal security; and the eradication of the partisan. He was nearly forty-two years of age, and, by 1942, was the quintessential ideological or political soldier.<sup>49</sup>

In September 1942, to instruct and indoctrinate the forces operating in the campaign, Himmler organised the publication of a pamphlet, entitled 'Bandenbekämpfung'.<sup>50</sup> The pamphlet was based upon abstracts from several sources including SD reports and captured partisan documents. It opened with Stalin's speech of July 1941, calling for a general uprising of guerrilla war. There was a copy of the Bandenschwur (Bandit-oath) and concluded with a section on the fundamental methods for combating the partisan (Grundsätzliche Betrachtungen zu den Methoden der Bekämpfung der Banden). It was this section of the booklet that suggested a model for combating the bandits.<sup>51</sup> The section opened with a warning for the troops to distinguish between normal military formations and the Bandits. That in turn, the military formation, along with the bandit group also had to be distinguished from the single opportunist bandit.

Another section focused upon intelligence gathering.<sup>52</sup> The SS operative was warned against the mobility of the bandit during the collection of intelligence. One recommended solution was the employment of trusted persons and informants (V-Männer). It was suggested they might be raised amongst ex-Red Army soldiers or ex-Bandit group members; local dignitaries and young girls, women, grandparents (Greise) and children. Captured bandits were to be regarded as sources of information and could therefore only be shot following intensive interrogation. It was suggested that merciful treatment (milde Behandlung) could be employed to surprise a bandit, who only expected to be executed, might provide more useful information. This treatment might include the offer of cigarettes and schnaps. The interrogator was also recommended to exploit the bandits' fear of reprisals against their families as a means to extracting even more information.

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<sup>49</sup> This opinion was based upon the collected views of Richard Breitman, *The Architect of Genocide: Himmler and the Final Solution*, (London 1991); Peter Padfield, *Himmler: Reichsführer-SS*, (London, 1990); Ruth Bettina Birn, *Die Höheren SS- und Polizeiführer: Himmlers Vertreter im Reich und in den besetzten Gebieten*, (Berlin, 1986); and his own SS personnel file.

<sup>50</sup> Der Reichsführer-SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei, *Bandenbekämpfung*, I Ausgabe, RSHA, September 1942, NA BDC microfilm record group 242, A3345-DS-J007, frames 692-726. There is a full copy of the manual in appendix 5.

<sup>51</sup> *Bandenbekämpfung*, 1942, p8-21.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, p10-13.

A later section of the booklet offered recommendations for the employment of preventative measures (Präventivmassnahmen).<sup>53</sup> The responsibility for informing the authorities of the presence of foreigners in the community was placed upon the local community leaders. Failure to do so was expected to lead to shootings or whippings. An alarm system was to be introduced, with a link established between villages using messengers, hand signals or radios; to warn of the presence of bandits. Strong points were to be erected at certain critical junctions, and a communication network coordinated along important transportation routes. If a security zone was to be declared, all the civilians within it were to be evacuated. Especially reinforced strong points were to be erected to fortify the security zone. Terrain that offered cover and allowed ambushes, such as forests along railway lines, had to be cleared and patrolled. In subsection four the manual described methods for combating the bandits.<sup>54</sup> The responsibility for actions was to be divided between the Waffen-SS, Ordnungspolizei, and Wehrmacht; while the SD and SIPO were responsible for intelligence gathering. The latter were to maintain the flow of intelligence for the troops during the fighting, to ensure that all the bandits were destroyed.<sup>55</sup> Depending upon the circumstances the soldiers were to be instructed to plunder all food and livestock from a village or community, and to deport the men folk. The older men were expected to join the Schutzmannschaft and assist in patrolling the locality. Finally, action groups were to be formed for immediate counter-attack against a bandit incursion.

In section five, the pamphlet continued to recommend aggressive counter-action towards the bandits.<sup>56</sup> Local units under the leadership of SD or police were to be formed to conduct counter operations. They were to carry radio equipment (Sendegeräte) when entering a bandit 'infected' (verseuchten) areas. Each member of a community had to be thoroughly checked, bandit suspects were to be killed one by one, but discretely to reduce the potential for instilling violent reactions. The services of local collaborators as agents was intended to sow doubts and suspicion within the bands. This pacification process was to be conducted with or without coercion against local dignitaries and with the village burgomaster held personally responsible (hostage).

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p13-15

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p14.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p16, it was pressed upon the intelligence gatherers that the work was continued and not considered superficial as it could endanger an operation and cost German blood.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p17.

Vergeltungsmassnahmen (revenge operations) were to be only sanctioned when there was no obvious explanation from a village leader, or where it was proven that the locals had assisted the bandits. It was insisted that a general air of willingness was to be generated amongst communities as a means to combating the intimidation of the bandits. This included actively reacting to bandit propaganda, countered through a more positive campaign. In the event of a misdirected revenge action, it was feared that some survivors would escape and join the bandits. Therefore, it was insisted that before a revenge action was carried out it a senior officer formally accepted the reasons for the punishment and granted the order.

This pamphlet was the first SS manual for Bandenbekämpfung and introduced the doctrinal basis of future security operations.<sup>57</sup> It was noticeable that in the event of a misdirected reprisal, the concern was for escapees joining the bandits rather than justice meted out against the German culprit. Himmler apparently ordered the production of the report from Gottlob Berger in mid-September 1942, and according to the letters a copy had been sent to Bach-Zelewski by November.<sup>58</sup> Hannes Heer has referred to a report drafted in July 1941, presented by the Einsatzgruppen on recommendations for the handling of partisans, this probably formed the basis of the manual.<sup>59</sup> The main body of the report was a translation of a captured Soviet manual, which was divided into general principles, the tactics of the fighting partisan (Kampfpartisanen), the destruction of communication (Verkehrswege und der Verbindungen), the robbing and destruction of supply camps, surprise attacks on enemy troops.<sup>60</sup> From the outset, Himmler was determined to make a mark on the operational side of Bandenbekämpfung. There was the heightened state of activity as Himmler began sending orders out on a host of subjects concerning Bandenbekämpfung, in other words 'he had hit the ground running'. Yet, his appointments diary presents another picture, he still maintained his routine

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<sup>57</sup> Generalfeldmarschall Albert Kesselring, FMS, C-032, *The War behind the front: guerrilla warfare*, 28<sup>th</sup> July 1947, p19. Only one senior officer of the Wehrmacht admitted knowledge of this manual after the war. In this FMS Kesselring stated, '...the pamphlet 'Guerrilla Warfare' published in 1942 was not distributed to his troops.'

<sup>58</sup> NA, T175, roll 81, frame 2601880, Brandt to Holfeld, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1942.

<sup>59</sup> Hannes Heer, 'Die Logik der Vernichtungskrieg', p.124, in Hannes Heer and Klaus Naumann (ed), *Vernichtungskrieg. Verbrechen der Wehrmacht*, (Hamburg 1995). Reference is to Einsatzgruppe A Tätigkeits- und Erfahrungsbericht 17.8.41 and 29.9.41 from MHA Prague. This was actually the translation of the Russian *Kampfanweisung für Partisanengruppen der Roten Armee*. See also Einsatzgruppe B published in the 'Ereignismeldungen'/SD reports the 'Kampfanweisung für Partisanengruppen, in late August 1941.

<sup>60</sup> Ereignismeldung UdSSR Nr. 65, 27<sup>th</sup> August 1941, pp.3-11, NA, T175, roll 233, frames 2722088-96

involvement in a whole host of differing projects. On the 17<sup>th</sup> August 1942, the day before the Führer directive was published, Himmler issued an order. It was a general statement to all members of the SS, Police and the administration stating that there was now a heightened state of alert. All women and girls, it warned, had the potential to be bandits and assassins.<sup>61</sup>

Almost immediately from taking responsibility, Himmler introduced a reporting system. This was an accounting system of casualties, what has since become known as a body count. It makes grim reading and forcibly illustrates the scale of killing and the racial origin of the victims. The accumulation of these reports can be found amongst Himmler's papers. This does not represent new history but it is graphically representative of the reality behind Bandenbekämpfung. Himmler began immediately reporting to Hitler the results of his work. In report number two regarding the results of Operation 'Greif' (21-22<sup>nd</sup> August 1942) he listed 98 bandits killed, 20 prisoners, with 6 partisan deserters (Überläufer). There were large quantities of material captured including several field guns. The German losses were listed as one dead and three wounded.<sup>62</sup> In a further report for the 24<sup>th</sup> August 1942, under the same Operation Greif he listed a further seven enemy dead and ten prisoners, for the death of two of his own men. However, this scale of reporting pales into insignificance when the results of the whole period are considered under report 51a (Table 11), as seen below:

**Table 11: Report 51a on overall performance of the SS (December 1942)** <sup>63</sup>

	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	TOTAL	BANDEN - SABOTAGE	TOTAL
<b>Banditen</b>						Industries	285
Killed in combat	227	381	427	302	1,337	Railways	262
Executed prisoners	125	282	87	243	737	Bridges	54
Executed later	2,100	1,400	1,596	2,731	7,827	Transmitting Stations	54
<b>Bandit helpers</b>						Others	40
Arrested	1,343	3,078	8,337	3,795	16,553		
Executed	1,198	3,020	6,333	3,706	14,257	Plunder: Animals	
Jews executed	31,246	165,282	93,735	70,948	363,211	Cows	3,442
Deserters	21	14	42	63	140	Pigs	2,869
<b>German Casualties: SS and Police</b>						Sheep	2,930
Dead	43	16	24	91	174	Horses	486
Wounded	16	5	16	95	132		
Missing	2	3	3	5	13		
<b>Schutzmannschaft</b>						Operations	
Dead	67	67	58	93	285	Destroyed camps	285
Wounded	34	33	17	43	127	Villages searched	1,716
Missing	16	10	39	68	133	Villages destroyed	159

<sup>61</sup> NA, 175, roll 112, frame 2636569, 17<sup>th</sup> August 1942

<sup>62</sup> NA, T175, roll 81, frame, 2601529, Meldung 2, 24<sup>th</sup> August 1942.

<sup>63</sup> NA, T175, roll 81, frame, 2601524, Meldung, 51a, December 1942.

In early September 1942, Himmler wrote to Gauleiter Koch (Reichskommissar for the Ukraine) stating that he was going to deal with the area around Zhitomir. Himmler wrote in his guise as Reichskommissar für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums, stating that he intended to settle 43,000 ethnic Germans in the area. He was going to do this not just to assist in the pacification of the area but also to return the area to its original 'natural' 1914 level of German immigration.<sup>64</sup> On the 30<sup>th</sup> October 1942, Himmler issued another general order to all HSSPF in the east:

I order that during operations against the bandits all civilians in the occupied or search areas are to be considered for labour and marched to Germany. The HSSPF are asked to get in touch with Gauleiter Sauckel.<sup>65</sup>

Irrespective of his energy and enthusiasm, Himmler was about to learn a hard lesson: he was totally unsuited to lead a significant counter-insurgency campaign. The weaknesses stemmed from his gross underestimation of the opponents and their intentions. Himmler never seemed to grasp that Stalin's plan was to simply undermine German authority in the occupied zones. Himmler believed every act of the partisan had to be combated with greater fire-power, manpower and harsh measures. He was wholly reliant upon the expertise and abilities of his subordinates; in some respects he was dependant upon their interpretation of success and failure. Himmler measured success through body counts, he relied upon these simple statistics of enemies killed, rounding up of labour and plunder; there is little evidence that he ever questioned the validity of these numbers. Finally, Himmler could never quite understand Stalin's willingness to lose large numbers of partisan lives in undermining German authority.

#### Bevollmächtigter des Reichsführers SS für Bandenbekämpfung

One of Himmler's vital skills was the ability to put together a problem solving team. His method was to meet with key individuals through pre-scheduled appointments. On 9<sup>th</sup> September 1942, he met with Bach-Zelewski, at his home, where they began with lunch at 2.00pm to 3.15pm. Later, they met for another hour from 7.00-8.00pm, and then again between 9.00-10.00pm. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> September presented a report to Hitler at 12.15pm covering a wide range of subjects including, on his list point 5, Sabotage and

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<sup>64</sup> NA, T175, roll 81, frame 2601765, letter from Himmler to Koch, 9<sup>th</sup> September 1942.

<sup>65</sup> NA, T175, roll 81, frame 2601725, order from Himmler 30<sup>th</sup> October 1942.

Bandenkrieg (bandit war). In September, Himmler visited Göring at Rominten staying at the Reichsjägerhof, where they spent two days hunting. On the 8<sup>th</sup> October, Himmler had more discussions with Hitler concerning British Special Forces, this probably led to the order to kill commandos. Later in October 1942, Himmler devised the function of Bevollmächtigter für die Bandenbekämpfung im Osten (The plenipotentiary for anti-bandit operations in the east). The choice of candidate for the position fell to Bach-Zelewski, who was promoted on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1942. This was essentially a liaison role, including intelligence gathering, although Bach-Zelewski was allowed to command forces in the field.<sup>66</sup>

Bach-Zelewski effectively became Himmler's personal representative and expert on all matters concerning the combating of banditry. Their mutual objective remained the pacification of occupied Soviet territory. Bach-Zelewski was granted special orders to work in the name of the Reichsführer-SS, reporting daily to Himmler. Within the same order he was assigned a small number of troops; they included the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> SS-Police Regiments, the Schutzmannschafts-Verbände (within HSSPF Russland-Mitte), the 1<sup>st</sup> SS-Infantry Brigade and the Freikorps 'Danmark' (Danish and Scandinavian collaborators).<sup>67</sup> It was an unusual situation, on the basis of troop numbers Bach-Zelewski was the equivalent of infantry division commander, but his responsibilities took him beyond the level of field operations. From the position of HSSPF, he was released from his administrative and bureaucratic responsibilities, although his status did not end until August 1944. He retained his position of HSSPF Russland-Mitte through the unique SS system of substitution. The form substitution took enabled, career SS officers to experience senior responsibility, while the officer in charge was released for other duties.

This period covered in Bach-Zelewski's diary raises some questions about his status within the Nazi hierarchy. On 11<sup>th</sup> November 1942, Himmler's personal pilot was killed, in what Bach-Zelewski described as 'serious day for the Reichsführer.'<sup>68</sup> On the 23<sup>rd</sup> November, he wrote of a meeting with Curt von Gottberg regarding the Jewish links to Bolshevism and the partisans. Two days later he discussed the subject of V-Männer with Walter Schellenberg and Operation Zeppelin. This involved using Russian

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<sup>66</sup> DKHH, pp542-596 and TVDB, p51.

<sup>67</sup> TVDB, pp51-52.

<sup>68</sup> TVDB, p53.

volunteers to provide intelligence for the Germans on either side of the frontlines. On the 28<sup>th</sup> November he was supplied with a small but odd collection of armoured units by Hans Jüttner, the chief of staff of the Waffen-SS. In 1942, Bach-Zelewski represented one of the regimes' leading lieutenants as can be seen in a message sent by Himmler on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 1942:

In this critical period all men must be armed to combat the bandit. The harder the fighting now, the sooner the civilian government can begin to work effectively.<sup>69</sup>

Later, Bach-Zelewski would write in his diary that this new position was a demotion because he was no longer a senior HSSPF, controlling large forces within a significant territorial area of Russia.<sup>70</sup> This was in fact a sham, in the same way that he was later to suggest in the first year of the Russian campaign that he was really under Schenckendorff's orders. At that time Bach-Zelewski had been the overseer of the extermination of Jews, Bolsheviks and resisters. It would have been politically inappropriate to have described his position as the plenipotentiary for race cleansing in the field, which of course is what he was. However, in this new role there was little need for secrecy. The promotion was a new stage in Bach-Zelewski's career; in the longer term it is likely that he was being prepared for the highest levels of Nazi leadership.

#### **IV. Initial Operations and Observations**

On the 17<sup>th</sup> August, the day before the Führer Directive was issued, Operation Greif had begun. The operation included the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> SS-Police Regiments for which Bach-Zelewski later admitted having a personal interest in. On the 20<sup>th</sup> August, he phoned Himmler and reported 11 enemy dead, 62 prisoners and 32 destroyed (Vernichtete); for the loss of one dead and two wounded. This kind of reporting continued, with similar results until the 30<sup>th</sup> August, when the operation was closed. The ratios were remarkable for 498 enemy dead the Germans had suffered 14 killed and 16 wounded; they also had 123 prisoners. He also noted on the 28<sup>th</sup> August, that the Germans were losing senior commanders to the partisans (two divisional, three regimental and four battalion commanders in just a few days).<sup>71</sup> On the 25<sup>th</sup> August 1942, Kurt Knoblauch, chief of the KSRFSS, ordered the SS-Cavalry Brigade to the Army Group Centre rear area to

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<sup>69</sup> NA, T175, roll 81, *ibid*, Funkspruch, Himmler to Bach-Zelewski, 16<sup>th</sup> November 1942.

<sup>70</sup> NA, T175, roll 81, frame 2601815, Funkspruch, Himmler to Bach-Zelewski, 27<sup>th</sup> November 1942.

<sup>71</sup> TVDB.

participate in Bandenbekämpfung.<sup>72</sup> It was placed under the tactical command of Bach-Zelewski and was expected to move by train in two days. These large-scale operations, the principal feature of Bandenbekämpfung operations, were conducted while there was a demand for ongoing policing. For example in December 1942, in the area of Bobruisk, over a thousand bandits were being combated by the Gendarmerie and a Slovakian formation, denuding the civilian authorities of security forces.<sup>73</sup> This was a major concern for the Nazi civilian authorities as will be seen shortly.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> September 1941, Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel wrote a set of broad principles for the armed forces regarding the growing problem of insurrection in the occupied territories of Russia.<sup>74</sup> Fifteen months later on 16<sup>th</sup> December 1942, Keitel issued an order on the guidelines for Bandenbekämpfung. It was not distributed through the SS leadership until the 13<sup>th</sup> February 1943. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1943, in a suitably phrased order entitled, Partisanenbekämpfung, Keitel wrote to the senior officers of the army formally announcing the transfer of responsibility to the RFSS. It appears to have been a reluctant acceptance of the status quo. It called for co-operation in the pacification process of the army rear areas and the Reichskommissariats. It was a bland order, official, but pointedly using the term 'Partisanenbekämpfung' in its capacity of official terminology for the last time.<sup>75</sup> To the German army, security continued to represent what it always had, security of supplies and the free movement of troops; suppression of armed resistance; collaboration from civilians; enforced labour; and the enforcement of its interpretation of martial law and order.

The more the army had expounded its intention to eradicate the partisan, and failed, the more this endorsed the SS challenge and in particular Himmler's candidature to take over the responsibility. The relationship between the army commanders and the SS, in the field, remained strong. On the 25<sup>th</sup> October 1942, Schenckendorff wrote to Bach-Zelewski regarding the 1<sup>st</sup> SS Infantry Brigade and the 206<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, congratulating them on their efforts during Operation Karlsbad.<sup>76</sup> Thus, the SS was made responsible for an enormous task but still dependant upon significant assistance

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<sup>72</sup> NA T175, roll 70, frame 25866872, Einsatz der SS-Kavallerie-Brigade zur Bandenbekämpfung.

<sup>73</sup> NA, T175, roll 81, *ibid*, Fernschreiben The Eastern Ministry in Berlin, 11<sup>th</sup> December 1942.

<sup>74</sup> NA, IMT C-148, Communist Insurrection in occupied territories, 16<sup>th</sup> September 1941, WFSt/Section L(IV) (Qu), No 002060/41, marked secret.

<sup>75</sup> NA, T175 roll 74, frame 2591696.

<sup>76</sup> NA, T175, roll 649, Schenckendorff 25<sup>th</sup> October 1942.



from the Wehrmacht for success. This unusual relationship was to continue until the end of the war, with the Wehrmacht taking the opportunity, when it arose, to claw back some of its authority.

#### Observations by the Ostministerium

The Reichskommissariats in the east were, according to Gerald Reitlinger, only temporary devices in the process of complete colonisation of Soviet Russia.<sup>77</sup> In July 1942, Gauleiter Kube provided a snapshot of how the anti-partisan war was viewed prior to the introduction of Bandenbekämpfung:

In all the clashes with partisans in White Ruthenia [Byelorussia] it has been proven the Jewry, in the former Polish section as well as in the former Soviet sections of the District General, together with the Polish movement of resistance in the East and the Red Guards from Moscow, is the main bearer of the partisan movement in the east. In consequence, the treatment of Jewry in White Ruthenia in view of the endangering of the entire economics, is a matter of political prominence, which should in consequence not be solved only according to economic, but also according to a political viewpoint.....In exhaustive discussions with the SS-Brigadeführer Zenner and the exceedingly capable leader of the SD SS-Standartenführer Dr. jur. Strauch, we have liquidated in the last ten weeks about 55,000 Jews in White Ruthenia. In the territory Minsk county Jewry has been completely eliminated, without endangering the manpower commitment.<sup>78</sup>

Kube went on to mention that 16,000 Jews from Lida and 8,000 Jews from Slonim had been executed. The army had killed a further 10,000 Jews without notifying him although the situation had been pre-planned. In Minsk (Byelorussia) 10,000 Jews were killed who were predominantly old men, women and children in just two days in June. Plans were being drawn up for a further series of killing actions in the area with an expected figure of 9,000 in Baranowitschi. The Jews of Minsk were to retain a presence in the city because of the demands of the munitions factories and the railways. He went on to say:

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<sup>77</sup> Reitlinger, 1960, p134. The Rosenberg Ministry was intended to form four Reichskommissariat, but the failures of the German army led to only two, Ostland and Ukraine, introduced as civilian administrations. The Kommissar of the Ukraine, Gauleiter of Eastern Prussia Eric Koch, had allegedly caused Bach-Zelewski serious political difficulties in Königsburg in the 1930s. He received his political patronage from both Hitler and Göring. His territorial authority was increased with the addition of the land bridge, known as Bezirk-Bialystok, an area partially policed by the Luftwaffe and is the subject of chapter nine.

<sup>78</sup> NA, IMT 3428-PS, Combating of Partisans and action against Jews in the District General of White Ruthenia, 31<sup>st</sup> July 1942.

The danger, that the partisans can rely essentially upon Jewry in the future, will then exist no longer... I would be grateful if the Reich Commissioner could possibly stop additional deportations of Jews to Minsk at least until the peril of the partisan movement had been subdued conclusively. I need the SD in its total force (100% commitment) against the partisans and against the Polish resistance movement, both of which are occupying the entire strength of the not overwhelmingly strong SD units... The Polish Jew is, exactly like the Russian Jew, an enemy of Germanism. He represents a politically dangerous element, the political danger of which exceeds by far his value as a skilled worker... I fully agree with the commander of the SD in White Ruthenia, that we shall liquidate every shipment of Jews, which is not ordered or announced by our superior offices, to prevent further disturbances in White Ruthenia.<sup>79</sup>

By the end of the year a new type of message was being delivered by officials from the civilian administration and reflected another kind of reality:

The conquered territory is claimed publicly not only for Germany as a colonisation area, but even for Germany's embittered enemies, the Dutch, Norwegians, and others. The economic exploitation is proclaimed verbally and in print, and carried out with almost elimination of the demands of the indigenous people, even with the greatest lack of consideration.<sup>80</sup>

This quote, an example of the translations submitted to the Nuremberg war crimes hearings, suggests that all of Europe was going to be beneficiaries of the Nazi occupation of Russia. This contrasts again with the following:

In the East, Germany is carrying on a threefold war: a war for the destruction of Bolshevism, a war for the destruction of the Russian Empire, and finally a war for the acquisition of colonial territory for colonizing purposes and economic exploitation.<sup>81</sup>

This mass of confusion as to what the final intentions were for the occupation undermined the potential for Lebensraum, as much as the Soviet partisans actions. In a memorandum written during October 1942, Otto Bräutigam, a senior member of Rosenberg's civilian administration in the east, described the failure of Germany's occupation policy. In this memo Bräutigam believed a war against Bolshevism would have led to success, and that the war against the Russian Empire would have also succeeded, but the imposition of colonialism had led to resistance the peoples of the

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<sup>79</sup> NA, IMT 3428-PS, *ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> NA, IMT 294-PS, Memorandum, II 1 1161/44/g, Top Secret, handwritten, 25<sup>th</sup> October 1942. Bräutigam was regarded as the Russian specialist within the regime.

<sup>81</sup> NA, IMT 294-PS, *ibid.*

east. He believed the Russian people could see behind the policies and the true intentions of mass enslavement following German victory. Further, he suggested the Germans themselves were at fault by publicly proclaiming at every opportunity the intention to colonise. He went on to list a series of lost opportunities, beginning with the need to find a political solution to the war, as the size of Russia precluded complete military victory, underwritten by the fact that the army did not intend to occupy the whole of the Soviet Union. In Bräutigam's view the only possible road to a successful conclusion was through civil war which would see the spiritual demise of Bolshevism. He also commented on the failure to fully instigate agricultural reform for the benefit of the peasants, to publicly introduce religious freedom, alongside private-property rights and to build some form of collaboration army. In the case of the latter, this would offer a better alternative to the Red Army soldier. Instead:

The resistance power of the Red Army and the strength of the partisan movement has mounted in the same degree as the population realised our true enlistment for them. The feats of arms of our noble army have been neutralised exactly as in 1918 by an inadequate political policy. Our political policy has forced both Bolsheviks and Russian nationals into a common front against us. The Russian fights today with exceptional bravery and self-sacrifice for nothing more or less than recognition of his human dignity.<sup>82</sup>

A month later Bräutigam produced a more comprehensive report of the state of the German occupation in the east. In this report he made five observations. Firstly, that the fighting had not led to the breakdown of the Red Army. Secondly, that the importance to the war effort of the occupation economy had become crucial. Thirdly, that large wars lend themselves to defeats and that German policy in the east might cause a general uprising. Fourthly, that German eastern policy had to change. Finally:

The size of the occupied territory results in a noticeable lack of security troops as well as fighting troops. The necessity of the military commitment of the Slav becomes apparent more and more, whether it be for the combating of partisans and in police service, or whether it is for use at the front even as will be necessitated by future developments.<sup>83</sup>

The realisation that the war was going to be prolonged was beginning to be felt by members of the civil administration in Russia. All resources including manpower were

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<sup>82</sup> NA, IMT 294-PS, *ibid*.

<sup>83</sup> NA, IMT, 1381-PS, December 1942, see also N&P pp 912.

stretched; the size of the occupation territory was beginning to give concern over the adequacy of policing. The direct costs of the partisan to the civilian administration can be seen in tables 12 and 13 below. They demonstrate the scale of casualties and the financial cost of the partisan actions. It is noticeable how both the number of casualties and the financial costs had increased dramatically in November 1942. This just happened to coincide with German's declining fortunes at the height of Stalingrad. What is more pertinent to this thesis, however, is the fact that after three months of Himmler's leadership the situation was still deteriorating.

**Table 12: Casualties inflicted by partisans (April to November 1942)<sup>84</sup>**

Number	Origins	Dead April-October 1942	Wounded April -October 1942	Dead Nov 42	Wounded Nov 42
1	German	103	30	8	15
2	SchutzMänner	35	78	8	4
3	Self-Defence units	32	14	1	-
4	Officials	68	1	72	18
5	Civilians	600	73	83	15
6	Lithuanian Troops	6	15	-	-
7	Ukrainian Troops	13	7	2	2
	Sub total	857	218	167	54
	Total	1024	221		

**Table 13: Financial cost of partisan actions (April to November 1942)<sup>85</sup>**

NUMBER	SOURCE	TOTAL	COST IN RM: APRIL-OCTOBER 42	COST IN RM: NOVEMBER 1942
1	Official buildings	138	649,000	131,000
2	Homes	233	448,000	313,000
3	Farms	834	1,208,000	296,000
4	Local offices	29	1,450,000	240,000
5	Agencies	20	60,000	45,000
6	Farmsteads		3,667,000	266,652
7	Industry		172,000	500,000
8	Roads		21,000	
9.	Railways		95,000	
10	Forestry		474,000	
	Sub total		8276,000	1,793,252
	Grand Total	10,039,968		

## V. Hitler's Occupation Security Policy

For some time our enemies have been using in their warfare methods which are outside the international Geneva Convention. Especially brutal and treacherous is the behaviour of the so-called commandos, who, as is established, are partially recruited from freed criminals of enemy countries...orders have been found in which the killing of prisoners has been

<sup>84</sup> NA, T454, roll 30, unreadable frame recorded losses by the Ostministerium attributable to partisan actions.

<sup>85</sup> NA, T454, roll 30, ibid.

demanded in principle.<sup>86</sup>

Since the start of 1942, the increasing problem of British special forces had been the subject of serious discussion among the Nazis leadership. The British troops (commandos and military missions) normally dressed in full military uniform. The existing laws of war only endorsed the execution of captured members of the SOE and saboteurs who usually dressed in civilian clothes. Both Germany and Britain were signatories to the existing laws of war and from the outset had promised to adhere to them. During the discussions following Heydrich's assassination, the SS had faced several institutional questions. Firstly, the territories exposed to British inspired operations had little or no SS influence. France, Norway, Yugoslavia and Greece were the preserve of the German army. Secondly, there were the issues associated with the laws of war. Thus, the initial scope of Bandenbekämpfung suited Nazi intentions in the east with its absolute criminalization of all forms of resistance. Whereas such policies introduced against the British might lead to indiscriminate reprisals against German servicemen.

The Commando Order of 1942 was crafted to overcome these problems and designed to encourage the German army to implement Bandenbekämpfung. It was made policy through an addendum to the original Bandenbekämpfung directive, thereby confirming the connection between both policy streams. Hitler, however, felt obliged to explain his decisions, soothing any sensitivities of the army's officer corps towards imposing a ruthless campaign in the west. He need not have been concerned. The army did not attempt to halt the introduction of the order nor did it prevent the enthusiastic killing of captured allied special forces troops. Why Hitler chose October to implement this policy is not altogether clear. The only decision prior to October occurred on the 4th August 1942, when the OKH had issued instructions on the handling of single allied parachutists.<sup>87</sup> In regards to the Commando Order, there is post war testimony from General Jodl, which sheds some light on the reasoning:

The order arose from Hitler's excitement about two kinds of intensified warfare which made their appearance about the same time in the autumn of

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<sup>86</sup> NA, IMT, 498-PS, Führer, No.003839742 g.Kdos. OKW/WFSt, Führer Hauptquartier, 18<sup>th</sup> October 1942.

<sup>87</sup> NA, IMT 553-PS, Combating of single parachutists, 4<sup>th</sup> August 1942, OKH WFSt, No. 8725/7. 42g. Secret.

1942. One was the fatal efficacy of excellently equipped sabotage detachments, which landed by sea or were dropped from the air. The other was a special running wild in the fighting methods of enemies who acted singly or in small groups [sic].<sup>88</sup>

On the 7<sup>th</sup> October 1942, Hitler had further ordered Jodl to issue an order on the handling of enemy soldiers who were deemed to have been 'fighting like bandits'. It was then followed on the 18<sup>th</sup> October 1942, when Hitler finally issued addendums 46a and 46b.<sup>89</sup> Hitler's explanation for the order began with a strategic assessment of the general situation:

I have been compelled to issue strict orders for the destruction of enemy sabotage troops and to declare non-compliance with these orders severely punishable. I deem it necessary to announce to the competent officers and commanders the reasons for this decree...As in no previous war, a method of destruction of communications behind the front, intimidation of the populace working for Germany, as well as the destruction of war-important industrial plants in territories occupied by us has been developed in this war.<sup>90</sup>

He believed that once the troops realised the gravity of this problem there would be no further need to worry about the partisan in the east. Hitler then began to parallel American and British methods with those of the Russians. The consequences of this kind of warfare were, he stated, lay in the crucial war industries. Hitler used the theoretical example of the destruction of an electric power plant where the subsequent loss of energy could deprive the Luftwaffe of thousands of tons of aluminium. This in turn would deprive the front of combat aircraft, leading to dire consequences for the homeland. Hitler concluded this section of his discourse with a lasting note for the soldier far away from home:

The homeland as well as the fighting soldier at the front has the right to expect that behind their back the essentials of nourishment as well as the supply of war-important weapons and ammunition remains secure.<sup>91</sup>

Hitler wanted to reinforce the east-west link of his methods. He explained that the combination of special units and 'ruthless brutality' had brought positive results in the

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<sup>88</sup> NA, IMT, (no document number) Jodl final statement of the defence.

<sup>89</sup> Walter Hubatsch, (n.d.), pp206-209.

<sup>90</sup> NA, IMT C-179, Hitler's Commando order 18<sup>th</sup> October 1942, IMT 498-PS pp 416-417, IMT 503-PS Hitler's statement on the changing nature of the war, pp426-430..

<sup>91</sup> NA, IMT, 498-PS.

east, describing it as an absolute war of annihilation between Germany and eastern banditry. He went on to say that in the east this kind of warfare had led to 'encroachment' upon the German fighting capability and caused casualties to soldiers and workers alike. The disruption of the transport and communications system and the intensification of such action would further impair German military efficiency. He blamed the German officers and soldiers for being unaware of the gravity and danger this kind of warfare represented; and as a consequence said:

It was therefore in part necessary in the East to organize special units who mastered this danger or to assign this task to special SS formations. Only where the fight against this partisan disgrace was begun and executed with ruthless brutality were results achieved which eased the position of the fighting front.<sup>92</sup>

Returning to the situation in the west Hitler continued, 'Even though, under a different name, England and America have decided upon a similar kind of warfare...'<sup>93</sup> He explained that the western allies had been employing sabotage troops who were issued with uniforms but usually wore civilian clothes. Hitler said that they ran no risk after brutally killing German soldiers or their allies, but if they were caught all they suffered was that of becoming a prisoner of war (alluding to their tacit rights under the Geneva Convention). In response they could be absolved from their past crimes, believing that that many of these troops were common criminals. He came to the logical conclusion that under these circumstances the western alliance could easily find volunteers where there was little risk but everything to gain. Interestingly, this dogma was not without its inner contradiction. At the time of these comments, the SS had activated the Dirlewanger Brigade, with its main body of troops coming from common criminals, initially poachers and later prisoners from concentration camps.<sup>94</sup> From a surviving record of a discussion made on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1942, Hitler had stated, 'Of course we must suppress the activities of the poachers...send them to fight the guerrillas, make them into a marksman's corps d'élite!'<sup>95</sup> The origins of the agreement to raise this unit of convicted poachers actually dated back to March 1940. Himmler had, with

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> NA, IMT 503-PS.

<sup>94</sup> French, MacLean, *The Cruel Hunters: SS-Sonderkommando Dirlewanger*, (USA, 1997).

<sup>95</sup> Table Talk, p682.

Hitler's agreement, ordered Karl Wolff to make the arrangements for the release of these convicts through the Reich Minister of Justice.<sup>96</sup>

Hitler's orders further imposed the sanction of immediate execution of captured commandos:

From now on all enemies on so-called Commando missions in Europe or Africa challenged by German troops, even if they are to all appearances soldiers in uniform or demolition troops, whether armed or unarmed, in battle or in flight, are to be slaughtered to the last man. It does not make any difference whether they are landed from ships and aeroplanes for their actions, or whether they are dropped by parachute. Even if these individuals, when found, should apparently be prepared to give themselves up no pardon is to be granted them on principle... If it should become necessary, for reasons of interrogation to initially spare one man or two, then they are to be shot immediately after interrogation.<sup>97</sup>

He went on to order the execution of commandos, even if captured by police forces. On all occasions they were to be kept isolated from contact with normal prisoner of war camps. There was to be no alternative to the carrying out of this order when Hitler also stated:

I will hold responsible under Military law, for failing to carry out this order, all commanders and officers who either have neglected their duty of instructing the troops about this order or acted against this order where it was to be executed.<sup>98</sup>

The failure of even a non commissioned officer to carry out these orders had to be reported to the higher authorities. Even down in the details of how actions were to be recorded in armed forces communiqués, Hitler ordered that a commando force had been reported destroyed:

The report on this subject appearing in the Armed Forces communiqué will briefly and laconically state that a sabotage, terror, or destruction unit has been encountered and exterminated to the last man.<sup>99</sup>

This represented a serious shift in the laws of warfare for it challenged the sacredness of the uniform. The basis of the Lieber Code and subsequent laws had been overturned and

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<sup>96</sup> MacLean, 1997, p42.

<sup>97</sup> NA, IMT, 503-PS.

<sup>98</sup> Nuremberg document No. 498-PS, order, No.003839742 g.Kdos. OKW/WFSt, Führer Hauptquartier, 18<sup>th</sup> October 1942. Marked Top Secret, it was distributed to all branches of the Wehrmacht and SS.

<sup>99</sup> NA, IMT, 503-PS.



not just for the purposes of eradicating the partisan. The Germans had not formally notified the allies of their intention to reinterpret the laws of war, but then neither had the allies. This reinterpretation of international law increased the scale of genocide conducted from the Atlantic to occupied Russia. Over a brief but important period, German security forces had been granted a license to kill on a grand scale. On the 19<sup>th</sup> October, Hitler issued a further order in which he stated that, 'This order is intended for commanders only and must not under any circumstances fall into enemy hands.' The circle of secrecy and security had been completed. During the later war crimes process, Bach-Zelewski was shown a document referred to as *Kampfanweisung für die Bandenbekämpfung im Osten* 11<sup>th</sup> November 1942.<sup>100</sup> The document was referred to as the 'The shooting of Partisan prisoners'. Bach-Zelewski said it was an order that had been framed around the Commando Order. The document further illustrates Hitler's disdain for the laws of war. The continental wide security zone was completed by the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1943, when the German High Command, South-East Europe, circulated an order from Field Marshal Keitel to the effect that the partisan war was the work of 'communist-trained fanatics who do not hesitate to commit any atrocity.'<sup>101</sup>

## VI. Summary

The introduction of *Bandenbekämpfung* in 1942 was a new initiative and level of sophistication into national security on the part of the Nazis. The depth of planning that followed Heydrich's death indicates how far Himmler and the SS-police leadership had become wholly preoccupied with security. The outcome was a policy that transformed the organisation of the armed forces and the direction of the German war effort. The methodology prescribed 'surgical' eradication of 'bandits' and 'bandit infected' areas. This points toward a further link between Nazi concepts of social Darwinism and *Lebensraum*. The *Bandenbekämpfung* policy itself was tailored to the *Staatsschutzkorps* concept. In other words, doctrine was matched by resources. In the longer term this policy spelled the end of any semblance of regulation of the war waged within the occupied territories. In effect the combination of Directive 46 and its two addenda removed the last elements of constraint within German security policy. In this respect

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<sup>100</sup> NA, IMT NOKW 067.

<sup>101</sup> NA, IMT, UK-66, Report of British War Crimes Section of Allied Force Headquarters on German Reprisals for Partisan Activities in Italy, undated (probably 1945). copy of a document marked 'A' dated 1<sup>st</sup> January 1943, but originating from orders dated 16<sup>th</sup> December 1942, Nr. 004870/42, Subject: Combating of Partisans.

Bandenbekämpfung was a National Socialist security policy, encouraged and supported by the Wehrmacht. Therefore, Bandenbekämpfung must be viewed as more than just an anti-partisan policy. Himmler's statements alone made it a racially biased and an overtly anti-Bolshevik doctrine.

### **Chapter Five: Manpower – Ausbildung and Security**

If the historian wants to know when the Nazi leadership decided that the mass murder of Jewry was no longer a future task but rather a goal to be achieved immediately, he must ascertain when the decision was taken to commit the necessary manpower. Establishing when this decision was taken will in turn help to elucidate the circumstances and motives behind it.<sup>1</sup>

The questions concerning manpower have dominated post war literature. There has been little analysis or reflection on how the SS leadership established the formations and manpower for Bandenbekämpfung. The spotlight of Browning's research fell upon the policemen deployed in the genocide of the Jews. In terms of linking a specific unit to a given task, his in-depth study of Reserve Police Battalion remains a solitary example. During the First World War the German security system had been adapted and remodelled to contend with the problem of the incomplete (in terms of conquest) but protracted occupation. It also introduced the concept of a permanent occupation security system. The Etappe became a melting pot of German manpower, including men at rest from or passing to the frontline, and the troops detailed with administering security. In Richard Holmes' opinion this was the cause of the vehement social distinction between front and rear soldiers, and the invective Etappenbullen (rear-area ox).<sup>2</sup> This chapter will analyse the question of manpower raised by the introduction of the Bandenbekämpfung directive in 1942.

Bandenbekämpfung called for upon the coordination of at least three different recruitment services under a semi-unified command system. From Hitler downwards there was a determination to remove the differences between the 'Etappenschweine' and the front soldier; that had developed in the First World War. Thus the question of front and rear does not explain the Nazi approach to management of occupation manpower. The methodological thinking behind the manpower decisions for Bandenbekämpfung were a lot more sophisticated. There was a remit to deploy newly trained men directly in the field, and without attending specific courses at the training depots. This meant the existing training programmes were not interrupted. Rather, the employment of Ausbildung (training) in the field through by the exposure to the Bandenbekämpfung

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<sup>1</sup> Browning, 1992, p104.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Townsend (Ed), *The Oxford History of Modern War*, (Oxford, 1997), p225 refers to Etappenschweine (rear-area pig) as an insult, which appears to have been confused with Frontschweine (front-pig) which was accepted as an honourable term.

‘blooded’ men of the SS and police prior to posting to security duties. This programme of training was characteristically German. This policy also indicates a further reliance upon youth rather than older manpower. In this respect Bandenbekämpfung was geared toward young, inexperienced men who in turn forced reliance upon a high level of leadership.

### **I. German army**

The Force Structures listed within Directive 46 rationalised the manpower by zone of operations and through allocation by function. Although the role of the army is not central in this thesis it is important to briefly mention how the directive effected the army’s structures. Generally, the army’s approach to Bandenbekämpfung was to treat it as a straightforward security task, relying to traditional methods. Essentially, in terms of manpower, the army relied upon its reserve forces:

#### Army Forces:

In order to reinforce the garrisons of the vast Eastern territories behind the fighting front, 1 order as follows:

- a. When the General Government becomes a Home Forces area, two reserve divisions will move to the General Government.
- b. A total of five reserve divisions will be moved to the spheres of Commander Armed Forces Baltic Territories and Commander Armed Forces Ukraine by 15 October 1942.
- c. All formations, units, staffs, establishments, and schools of the Field Army not serving under the Commander of the Replacement Army will be withdrawn by 1 October 1942 from the General Government and transferred to the territories of the Reich Commissioners or to the area of operations. Any necessary exceptions will be approved by the Chief of the High Command of the Armed Forces.
- d. The final target is to transfer by the end of October a replacement force of 50,000 men formed from the Reserve Army.
- e. The necessary operation orders concerning paragraphs a. to d. will be issued by the Chief of the High Command of the Armed Forces.<sup>3</sup>

The Wehrmacht received the full benefit of the German conscription system with a regular flow of reserves up to the end of the war. Hitler made four key decisions in Directive 46, as regards to the army. The first turned General-Government of Poland

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<sup>3</sup> Trevor-Roper, 1960.

into a 'Home Forces' area with two reserve divisions. Secondly, five reserve divisions were moved to the Baltic and Ukraine, which was to be completed by 15<sup>th</sup> October 1942. Thirdly, by 1<sup>st</sup> October 1942 all formations, staff, establishments, and schools of the Army stationed in the General Government were to be transferred into the Reichskommissars, or within the operational areas. Finally, a target was set to transfer, by the end of October 1942, replacement forces of 50,000 men from the Reserve Army to the operational areas.

By the end of the Second World War the numbers of men involved in the security of a rear area depended upon the scale of the problem. In March 1944, von Rothkirch, the Wehrmachtsbefehlshaber Weissruthenien, could deploy 37,640 men, but by April these numbers had reduced to 30,609.<sup>4</sup> According to a report of the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1944, the size of Oberfeldkommandantur 400 was three regiments.<sup>5</sup> Although not completely clear, it seems the German response to the changing conditions of the war involved accumulating security regiments under the Feldkommandanturen. This appears to have been a means of empowering the forces on the ground rather than relying on the centralised system. This rationalisation was certainly made after the summer of 1942, probably in the period following the territorial reshuffles of responsibilities in August of that year. It reflected the heightened manpower shortages that began to undermine the German war effort.

## **II. The SS-Police Establishment**

### **The Forces of the Reichsführer-SS:**

The Police and SS formations available and allocated for operations against bandits are intended primarily for active operations. Their employment in other security duties is to be avoided. Efforts will be made to reinforce Police and SS formations in the East, and to transfer to the threatened areas a considerable number of establishments of the Reichsführer-SS at present employed elsewhere. Formations still at the front, but indispensable for operations against bandits in the rear areas, will be withdrawn from the Army as soon as possible, and placed at the disposal of the Reichsführer-SS

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<sup>4</sup> BA MA RW 41/59a/75/58/60 Wehrmachtsbefehlshaber Ukraine, document 191.

<sup>5</sup> BA MA, RW 41/59a/75/58/60 Wehrmachtsbefehlshaber Ukraine, documents 41 and 42. The 611 Sicherungsregiment (made up of Landeschützen Battalions 523, 551, 957, 975), 37 Security Regiments (Landeschützen Battalions 192, 589, 669, 561) and 88 Security Regiments (Landeschützen Battalions 291, 292, 949, 958).

for duty in their proper areas.<sup>6</sup>

To instigate *Bandenbekämpfung*, Himmler could not rely on the availability of frontline *Waffen-SS* divisions (though this did not prevent these divisions from conducting *Bandenbekämpfung* when it was required). Instead, he was forced to use the ancillary units of the SS, the three *Waffen-SS* brigades controlled by the *KSRFSS* and the Police. Meanwhile the *Waffen-SS* had begun to take on the form and serious structure which were to highlight its activities in the latter part of the war. On the 13<sup>th</sup> July 1942 the chief of staff of the *Waffen-SS* Hans Jüttner published the *Waffen-SS* reserves order of battle.<sup>7</sup> The report highlighted the growth of the *Waffen-SS* and in particular the establishment of the of the SS-Mountain Division ‘Prinz Eugen’ which was to be based solely in the Balkans. The report also listed the size and scale of the formations still assigned to the *KSRFSS*, including the two infantry brigades and the cavalry brigade. The report clearly shows that the infantry brigades had their reserve depots in Breslau which of course had been Bach-Zelewski’s *HSSPF* prior to the operations in Russia, and also where his family still lived. The cavalry brigade had been formed by Hermann Fegelein in Warsaw and their reserve depots remained based in that city. On the 8<sup>th</sup> August Kurt Knoblauch, the chief of staff of the *KSRFSS*, issued Order Number 64 which set in train the allocation of forces for the *Bandenbekämpfung* campaign.<sup>8</sup>

Distinguishing between normal policing and anti-bandit policing was first made in the allocation of forces section of the directive. The police and SS forces detailed for anti-banditry under Himmler were expected to conduct ‘active’ operations against the bandits. This term ‘active’ was to become a prominent issue. The return of police units serving with the *Wehrmacht* or transfers of units deployed elsewhere was to be brought under Himmler’s control in the east. Those police units in important positions under *Wehrmacht* control were to be returned once a replacement unit was in position. The directive also made it clear that units deployed to combat the bandits were not to be employed in other security duties. This was the beginning of the formation of centralised units to be used for large-scale operations, to be deployed in any of the SS sectors.

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<sup>6</sup> Trevor Roper, 1960.

<sup>7</sup> NA, T175, roll 135, frames 149539, SS-Führungshauptamt, Verzeichnis der Zuständigen Ersatz truppenteile der *Waffen-SS*.

<sup>8</sup> NA, T175, roll 135, frame 0023876, Commando Order Nr, 64, Ia 498/42, 8<sup>th</sup> August 1942.

The SS did not enjoy the benefits of the conscription system, relying on men to volunteer at the point of call-up, or on foreign and ethnic German manpower raised from within other countries. Until August 1942, manpower was raised under the general heading of frontline or security. Under the terms of Directive 46, troops were to be allocated and made available only for *Bandenbekämpfung*.<sup>9</sup> The problem for the SS was to stretch their limited manpower resources to what was territorially an enormous task. The SS increasingly used the security mission to forge the police into a military force. The senior officer responsible for SS manpower was Gottlob Berger. He was a First World War veteran, a loyal friend to the infamous Dr. Oskar Dirlewanger, and a sports and youth training specialist. Robert Koehl referred to him as:

The “Almighty Gottlob” – Gottlob Berger, sometime SS recruiter, chief of the Germanic Guidance Office, last head of the SS main office... instrumental in developing and coordinating the Ethnic German Self-Defense units in Czechoslovakia and Poland... unquestionably shaped the future wartime SS, both in the use of non-citizens as recruits as well as in the conception of the European SS... the chief agitator for a multi-ethnic SS from 1942 on.<sup>10</sup>

Berger joined the SS in 1936 and became its recruitment officer. Later in the war he was behind agreements with Rumania and Hungary allowing the transfer of ethnic Germans into the *Waffen-SS*. Berger was also concerned with the ideological education and indoctrination of the troops. Books included patriotic histories of great men and novels of romantic patriotism. He was also responsible for the publication of the *SS-Leithefte* a regular journal of everyday life. Berger used large-scale training centres such as Sennheim in the Alsace for basic training. The camp specialised in initiating men in to German and SS society. Volunteers came from Ukraine, Estonia and Latvia. From 1943 Berger was Himmler's representative in the *Ostministerium*. From 1942, Berger was also commander of the *Postschutz Deutscher Reichspost* (German Postal Defence Corps). This was a force of 2,000 men with 500 vehicles and trained as combat units. The postal police were founded in 1920, opening four offices in Poland and six on the eastern front. Thus in Berger and Jüttner, Himmler had the perfect combination of staff officers, who built up the SS organisation and found unique methods of recruitment. Berger alone proved that the potential for unusual sources of

<sup>9</sup> Trevor Roper, 1960, under the section titled ‘Available forces’, of the *Bandenbekämpfung* directive 46.

<sup>10</sup> Koehl, 1983, p236.

manpower would further expand Nazi dreams of empire. The initial SS-Police manpower had relied upon separate systems. When in 1941 the SS and police were working as one organisation, there was a duplication of effort. In February and July of 1942, the first steps were taken to rationalise the overall SS-Police organisation. By the end of the year the Police had achieved a level of structural harmony. Following the introduction of Directive 46, structural refinements began to be implemented.

#### The Kommandostab-Reichsführer-SS

The Waffen-SS should be viewed in its true context, a body of ‘armed ideological fighters’ and not the so-called elite warriors of post war myth-making. The clearest demonstration of the political-military mission of the Waffen-SS is found in the disposition of the KSRFSS as at the 1<sup>st</sup> June 1942. This formation was self-contained for the security mission, that combined mobility, fire-power and deployment flexibility in the field (balance of motorised and cavalry troops). To understand its changes we have to refer to a few months prior to Directive 46 to illustrate the change:

**Table 14: The tactical standing of the KSRFSS (3 April 1942)<sup>11</sup>**

FORMATION	OFFICERS	NCOS	MEN
KSRFSS	37	56	185
Signals detachment	15	29	279
1 <sup>st</sup> SS Infantry Brigade	57	285	1,883
2 <sup>nd</sup> SS Infantry Brigade	74	286	2,145
SS Cavalry Brigade	Unknown	-	-
Total	183	656	4,492

The lists of the actual fighting manpower of the KSRFSS, in Table 14, highlight how far the available combat manpower had been reduced by the hard fighting in the winter of 1942. The comparative list of Table 15, illustrates how far the loss of manpower was experienced at all levels of the KSRFSS structure, especially in the ratio between officers and men. The combination of Waffen-SS and police forces was also complemented by the method of internal construction of the forces. The infantry and the police units were highly mobile in terms of vehicles and they were complemented by the flexibility of cavalry. Also, the balance of power in terms of weaponry placed the Waffen-SS formations in the central support role to the police.

<sup>11</sup> NA, T175, roll 16, frames 2519158 to 2519698, papers of the KSRFSS.



**Table 15: The changes in the KSRFSS (June 1941 to April 1942)<sup>12</sup>**

JUNE 1941	OFF	NCO	MEN	APRIL 1942	OFF	NCO	MEN
Command - Staff	163	134	384		55	75	267
Signals detachment	14	71	300		17	34	316
Kriegsbericht	10	51	35		1	6	35
Escort Btl. RFSS	26	110	603		-	-	-
1 <sup>st</sup> SS Infantry Brigade	258	1,309	6,074		149	659	3,511
2 <sup>nd</sup> SS Infantry Brigade	246	1,308	5,747		180	655	4,508
SS Cavalry Brigade	174	768	4,037		131	363	3,734
Frw.-Leg "Flandern"	31	160	865		-	-	-
Frw.-Leg 'Niederlande'	111	546	2,840		-	-	-
SS-Flak Abt "Ost"	30	110	666		10	29	406
Verwaltungsdienste	13	40	217		13	32	235
Supply department	28	70	380		15	50	296
Sanitätsdienste	21	36	191		29	41	146
Veterinary Department	6	58	348		4	18	137
Ordnungsdienste	4	98	22		5	46	173
Field Post	3	3	12		2	10	4
Armed geological section	8	40	324		12	66	576
Full	1,145	4,912	23,045		623	2,082	14,344

The following table of manpower from the 2<sup>nd</sup> SS Infantry Brigade presents some new data on the size of its units and their manpower shortages:

**Table 16: The changes in the 2<sup>nd</sup> SS Infantry Brigade (May 1942 to June 1942)<sup>13</sup>**

May 1942		Officers	NCO	Men	Horses	June 1942	Officers	NCO	Men	Horses
Staff	Position	5	3	23		Staff	5	3	23	
	Normal	5	3	23			5	3	23	
Escort-Btl. RFSS	Position	7	42	263		Escort-Btl. RFSS	4	38	243	
	Normal	11	45	265			8	43	263	
Frw.-Leg "Flandern"	Position	8	28	220		Frw.-Leg Flandern"	6	32	257	
	Normal	8	40	288			10	43	333	
SS-Flak Abt "Ost"	Position	15	59	297		SS-Flak Abt "Ost"	18	50	290	
	Normal	20	86	494			23	69	468	
Lands. Schu. Btl. 232	Position	3	26	125		Lands. Schu. Btl. 232	3	21	96	
	Normal	6	86	169	63		6	36	146	66
Lands. Schu. Btl. 636	Position	11	42	235		Lands. Schu. Btl. 636	7	40	244	
	Normal	12	57	325	117		10	50	281	117
Artillery Group 'Idel'	Position	12	93	427						
	Normal	15	97	451	377	Group 'Valentin'	9	40	176	
Jagdkommando 12	Position	4	28	117			11	46	226	
	Normal	6	66	226	191					
Actual troop level		65	321	1,707		Total troops - combat	52	224	1,329	
Normal troop level		83	480	2,241		Full	73	290	1,740	

The table isolates those units within the brigade that relied upon horses, the army reservists of the Landesschützen Battalions. The collaborators from the Flanders Legion were a significantly sized force within the overall composition of the brigade. At that time the brigade was resting and recuperating following the defensive battles between December 1941 and March 1942. It is not possible, at this stage, to assess the greater

<sup>12</sup> NA, T175, roll 16, frames 2519158 to 2519698, papers of the KSRFSS.

<sup>13</sup> BA MA, RS4, 2<sup>nd</sup> SS Infantry Brigade.

meaning behind these numbers, but they do not suggest the front line experience had destroyed either the individual units or the brigade as a coherent formation.

### Transformation and Change: 1942 to 1943

The significant transformations and changes in SS manpower and organisational policy took place alongside the introduction of the directive. Beginning with the KSRFSS, it was taking a more diverse body of troops; highlighted in the following table:

**Table 17: The changes in the KSRFSS (June 1942 to March 1943)<sup>14</sup>**

FORMATION:	JUNE 1942		FORMATION:	MARCH 1943
KSRFSS	Principal Formations	Reserve Depot	KSRFSS	New formations
1 <sup>st</sup> SS infantry Brigade	8 <sup>th</sup> SS Infantry Regiment	Breslau	1 <sup>st</sup> SS infantry Brigade	
	10 <sup>th</sup> SS Infantry Regiment	Breslau		SS-Brigade 'Schuldt'
2 <sup>nd</sup> SS Infantry Brigade	SS-Escort Battalion	Breslau	2 <sup>nd</sup> SS Infantry Brigade	
	SS-Flak Detachment 'Ost'	Arolsen		
	Volunteer Legion 'Flandern'	Graz	Volunteer Legion 'Flandern'	
	Volunteer Legion 'Niederlande'	Graz	Volunteer Legion 'Niederlande'	
SS-Cavalry Brigade	1 <sup>st</sup> SS Cavalry Regiment	Warsaw		SS-Kampfgruppe Fegelein
	2 <sup>nd</sup> SS Cavalry Regiment	Warsaw		
	3 <sup>rd</sup> SS Cavalry Regiment	Warsaw		Freikorps Danmark
				Finnische Freiw. Batl
Volunteer Division 'Prinz Eugen'	Serbia			Estnische SS-Legion
				Volunteer Legion Norwegen
Foreign Volunteers Group	Austria			
Battalions of the Waffen-SS	HSSPF Russland-Nord	Breslau	Battalions of the Waffen-SS	HSSPF Russland-Nord
	HSSPF Russland-Mitte	Breslau		HSSPF Russland-Mitte
	HSSPF Russland-Süd	Breslau		HSSPF Russland-Süd
Supply Command of the Waffen-SS and Police	Nord, Mitte and Süd	Breslau	Supply Command of the Waffen-SS and Police	Nord, Mitte and Süd

These formations included the newly raised SS-Division 'Prinz Eugen', which was principally a mountain infantry formation, based in the Balkans. This widened the original brief of the KSRFSS beyond the eastern front, and into an area where the SS had not acquired real executive powers.<sup>15</sup> In 1942, the unusual, and much written, about

<sup>14</sup> NA, T-175, roll 135, *ibid*, SS-Führungshauptamt, Organisation, 1<sup>st</sup> June 1942, Berlin. It is also interesting, but probably coincidental, to note how many units had depots in Breslau, which of course was Bach-Zelewski's HSSPF command area until May 1941. The SS-Cavalry division had transferred to the Waffen-SS general commando along with the 'Prinz Eugen' division. The SS-Brigade 'Schuldt's' papers have not been located.

<sup>15</sup> NA, T354 Waffen-SS records, roll 146, frames 213943 to 213954, report of the SS-Armed Geological

Dirlewanger formation joined the SS Brigades. Originally formed from prison inmates found guilty of poaching 94% (in the initial years when it was a battalion) in the last year of the war, over 80% were from other prisoners and SS men serving penal sentences.<sup>16</sup> The combination of the hard fighting and the losses suffered through typhus forced the SS into a rebuilding phase, which in turn led to the transformation of the KSRFSS. The SS Cavalry Brigade, after its considerable losses during the same winter defensive battles, a decision was made to turn it into a division.

The SS Cavalry Division ‘Florian Geyer’, as it was to become known, saw a change in its commanding officers, between June 1942 and May 1943. In this same period it built for itself a strong reputation for performance in the fighting against the partisans. Two of the first commanders, Hermann Fegelein and Fritz Freitag, had become well known for their ruthless methods. Wilhelm Bittrich was chosen to be the first commander of the new division and this was an important decision. Unlike Hermann Fegelein, who was relatively inexperienced as a senior commander, Bittrich had the full military credentials for the new position. There are two sets of evidence that paint an altogether different picture of Bittrich as an SS man. There is considerable evidence of his disregard for the plight of the Jews. In April 1938 when Bittrich was a battalion commander of an SS regiment in Vienna, he and his wife purloined the property of a Jewish man, Benno Israel Schwoner, to the value of 4,799 Reichsmarks.<sup>17</sup> Bittrich’s reputation on the battlefield was hardly any better; ruthlessness in Yugoslavia during the invasion of 1941 later listed him as a suspected war criminal. During his time as commanding officer of the Waffen-SS Regiment “Deutschland” between November 1940 and October 1941, he was alleged to have killed Serbs and Jews in a village in Yugoslavia.<sup>18</sup> Later still he was accused of having ordered the execution of French resistance members in 1944. He was prevented from being extradited to Yugoslavia on the pretext of being a wanted criminal in France and the Americans required him to

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Battalion’s operations in Yugoslavia. Little is known about this battalion. It was present for a short while in the KSRFSS in Russia 1941-1942. The report of the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1943 by the geologists suggested an abundance of raw materials, and thereby indicates its key role in the process of exploitation.

<sup>16</sup> Maclean, 1998, appendix 7, p282.

<sup>17</sup> NA SS personnel file Wilhelm Bittrich, letters 1938 to 1942. They included a fridge worth 500 RMs and an English baby grand piano valued at 700 RMs. The Gestapo investigated the case and for three years there was some doubt as to whether they would be allowed to keep the stolen property. Eventually the case came to nothing probably because Himmler did not want one of his Knights Cross bearers and national hero’s appearing as a common criminal.

<sup>18</sup> NA, RG 319, IRR Case Files, XE012991, Wilhelm Bittrich, investigation papers 1945 to 1954.

work for the Historical Branch of the US Army in the Foreign Military Study programme.<sup>19</sup>

There was mounting evidence that the fighting against the partisans required the use of heavier weapons. Heavy weapons, especially artillery and an anti-tank detachment expanded the fire power of the cavalry division. This turned the division into anachronism between a typical Nineteenth Century cavalry formation and the typical mechanisation of modern warfare; mounted troopers alongside self-propelled guns and armoured vehicles. We can only presume that from the outset the division was formed for the specific task of security. The first mission it was sent on involved anti-partisan operations in Bobruisk in September 1942. It is Leonie Wheeler's contention, along with that of Bernd Wegner, and others that the SS misused their manpower:

SS leaders..., who wished to advance their claim to control a pet project, were apt to exaggerate the number of men under their command whom they could make available for that task. In a similar fashion, when desired results failed to materialise, the person responsible for a particular action or campaign would attribute the miscarriage of the mission to the inadequate men at his disposal. This tendency to falsify manpower levels – encouraged as it was by the system of government, which evolved under the Nazis – was endemic in the east.<sup>20</sup>

From the perspective of the reserve forces, one can see in the distribution of the Waffen-SS formations few changes since 1940. It indicates that the Waffen-SS was establishing itself as an institution outside Germany:

**Table 18: Waffen-SS reserve forces<sup>21</sup>**

B) RESERVE FORCES		
Befehlshaber der Waffen-SS	Holland	
Befehlshaber der Waffen-SS	Czechoslovakia	
SS Reserve Infantry Btl	Ost	Zhitomir
SS Mountain Reserve Btl	Prinz Eugen	Pantschowa
SS Reserve Police Grenadier Btl. I		Hertogenbosch
SS Reserve Police Grenadier Btl. II		Amersfoort
Reserve Company Danish Freikorps	Danmark	Bobruisk
Reserve Company Norwegian Legion	Norway	Mitau

<sup>19</sup> Cornelius Ryan, *A Bridge Too Far*, (London, 1976), and the film of that name from 1977. The opinion has developed among military historians that Bittrich was a professional soldier, albeit a senior Waffen-SS officer, who during the Battle of Arnhem projected himself with honour and grace by his treatment of captured British paratroopers.

<sup>20</sup> Wheeler, 1981, pp408-413.

<sup>21</sup> NA, T-175, roll 135, *ibid*.

On the one hand the figures suggest that the Waffen-SS was expanding in the occupied territories. The SS 'Polizei' division was trained in Holland and maintained its reserve depots there. The Volunteer Legions had moved their depots to occupied Russia along with the infantry reserve at Zhitomir. We have to accept that this evidence alone does not confirm that the Waffen-SS was expanding as a consequence of SS responsibility for Bandenbekämpfung.

### The Ordnungspolizei

The sphere of duties of the Main Office of the Ordnungspolizei includes police administration as well as the management and direction of the protective police (Schutzpolizei) of the Reich, the gendarmes, the protective police of the community (Gemeinde), the water protection police (Wasserschutzpolizei), the air protection police (Luftschutz), the fire protection police (Feuerschutzpolizei), the protective groups in the occupied territories (Schutzmannschaft), the colonial police (Kolonialpolizei), the volunteer fire department, the compulsory and youth fire departments, the technical aid and the technical SS and police academy.<sup>22</sup>

Ironically, it was the police that expanded most as a consequence of Directive 46. Both Himmler and Daluge used the loopholes in the system to expand the police, firstly, by battalions and later into a regimental order of battle with the inclusion of specialist troops (armour, artillery and mine-clearing). Tessin has catalogued the number of SS-Police regiments and battalions.<sup>23</sup> According to Tessin, the total number of Ordnungspolizei manpower in 1942 was 276,000 and for Hilfspolizeikräfte 1,991,500.<sup>24</sup> Forty-seven police battalions were committed to occupation duties, a total of 48,910 officers and men. This was broken down as listed in Table 19.

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<sup>22</sup> NA, IMT 2640-PS, translation of Dr. Robert Ley (Ed), *Organisation Book of the NSDAP*, (Munich, 1943), pp 417-428. IMT 2825-PS, 'SS Soldiers Friend' (Der Soldatenfreund), pocket diary for the German Armed forces calendar 1943, (Hanover), 1<sup>st</sup> August 1942, pp 462.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, pp 527-666. Tessin numbered German police battalions at 110. Of the Schuma battalions: Ostland 1-50 and 250 to 328; Russland Mitte 51-74 (no 58 or 59), Ukraine 101 to 166 and 181 to 186. Poland 201 to 212 and 3 Cossack. Police on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1942 165,128. Total manpower estimate for the period 1943 to 1944 was 3,500,000.

<sup>24</sup> Tessin and Kannapin, 2000, p652.

**Table 19: Police battalions committed to occupation (February 1942)<sup>25</sup>**

TERRITORY	FORMATION	MEN
Soviet Russia:		12,070
Attached to security divisions	9 battalions	
Attached to the Security Police	1 battalion	
Attached to the Organisation Todt	1 battalion	
Reichskommissariat Ostland	3 battalions	3,439
Reichskommissariat Ukraine	3 battalions	3,880
Serbia	1 battalion	700
Norway	7 battalions	4,591
General-government of Poland	9 battalions	10,997
Czechoslovakia	2 battalions	4,238
Holland	4 battalions	2,729
South Steiermark	7 battalions	6,366
Total deployed for occupation duties	47	48,910

Since the beginning of 1942, the Police commanders began to reorganise and concentrate formations into regiments. On 24<sup>th</sup> February 1942, a general order by the RFSS turned these regiments into SS-Regiments.<sup>26</sup> Interestingly, many of the police battalions used in these amalgamations came from units serving within German army rear area formations, essentially the security divisions. This was an important movement of troops from one chain of command to another and predated the introduction of the directive by some six months. There were, with minor exceptions, forty-two SS-Police Regiments of which approximately two-thirds served in Russia, Yugoslavia, and Poland; the first being ready for service from July 1942. The process of change continued into July 1942 and according to Tessin, the numbers involved changed again. This involved raising over 40 regiments of up to four battalions per regiment.<sup>27</sup> An order issued on the 9<sup>th</sup> July 1942 saw the deployment of the SS-Police regiments that later became the backbone of the Bandenkampfverbände. Seventy-five battalions of police, along with nine new battalions were to be reformed into 28 regiments. The problem at the heart of SS decisions on manpower concerned its two missions: the destruction of the Jews and the pacification for Lebensraum. The rapid industrialisation of the process of genocide was necessary to allow the transfer of manpower to the security programme. Similarly, the police after June 1943 began to raise Galician

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p 561, there were two mounted detachments, one each in Poland and the Ukraine. This table is questionable in its contents as many more battalions appear to have been assigned to Russia.

<sup>26</sup> Tessin and Kannapin, *ibid*, p557.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p615.

regiments, recruited from Ukrainians living in former Habsburg and Polish territory (of which there were at least five).

The most significant change in the police forces was the emergence of the specialist arms of service. The existing specialist police branches remained the *Wasserschutzpolizei*, *Technische Nothilfe*, and *Feuerschutzpolizei* branches, all of which served in Soviet Russia. Within all branches there were specialist companies which supplied a broad range of military functions. The most notable of these units were the *Polizei-Panzerkompanien* (police armoured companies), *Polizei-Panzerjäger-Kompanien* (police tank-hunting companies), *Polizei-Pionier-Kompanien* (police engineer companies), *Polizei-Reiter-Abteilungen* (police cavalry detachments), *Polizei-Artillerie-Abteilungen* (police artillery detachment), and the *Polizei-Nachrichten-Abteilungen* (police reconnaissance detachment).

In January 1943, Kurt Daluge, as had become normal procedure, presented his annual report on all branches of the uniformed police.<sup>28</sup> The police manpower had reached an overall figure of 2,801,433 men. Careful analysis, however, shows this figure was inflated by volunteer firemen, Hitler Youth helpers, the *Luftschutz* (air raid defence) and women air raid helpers. The figures were also boosted by collaboration troops of 300,876 men. The specific figure for German manpower was 177,957 professional police with 132,000 reservists. The police quota had more surpassed the shortfall that had been calculated in July to November 1941. There were still a further 25,390 men assigned to the *Wehrmacht*, the members of the GFP, the *Waffen-SS* 'Polizei' Division, and various specialist branches. Total casualties for 1942, due to all causes were 5,012 dead, with a further 9,389 wounded and 251 held as prisoners of war. A large proportion of the losses had been inflicted upon the 'Polizei' division serving on the frontlines near Leningrad. The emphasis of Daluge's report was the frontline or the operational perspective. Police battalions served in all the rear areas. Military medals had been plentiful with 716 Iron Crosses First-Class, 7,819 Second-Class and 2,200 infantry assault badges. The Army Group Centre area of operations was identified as the 'Schwerpunkt' of police activities in the fight against enemy partisan specialists. To combat these specialists the older reservists of the 1900-1905 age groups had been the backbone of the police forces. In particular, the men of the 65<sup>th</sup> Police Battalion had

<sup>28</sup> NA, T175, roll 3, frames 2503430 to 2503532, *Dienstbesprechung der Befehlshaber und Inspektoren der Ordnungspolizei im Januar 1943 in Berlin*.

fought hard in combating bandits for over a hundred days taking part in 128 missions. By the end of 1943, police had developed a high level of militarization. This process was the fulfilment of Daluege's policy of militarization of the police, and was testimony to his influence.

### **III. Young men: recruits for the Bandenkampfverbände**

There was nothing extraordinary about these men. They had little of the appearance of 'willing executioners'. The SS volunteers were probably more attracted by the idea of owning land in the east than the doctrine behind which they were fighting. There was little evidence of deep ideological training or indoctrination. On the contrary there seemed to be a continuation of military 'bull' and drill instruction, especially given that this period of service was in wartime. This manifested itself in the demand for proficiency tests, reading and writing tests and extensive documentation regarding transfers. The training became combat realistic when the men deployed for Bandenbekämpfung operations prior to being sent directly to the front.

#### Men and recruitment

Thanks to its method of recruiting, the SS will be a nursery of rulers. In a hundred years' time from now, we'll control this whole empire without having to rack our brains to know where to find the proper men. The essential is to leave behind the pettinesses of the parochial spirit.<sup>29</sup>

We'll produce from it all a new type of man, a race of rulers, a breed of viceroys. Of course, there'll be no question of using people like that in the west.<sup>30</sup>

Analysis of SS personnel records from the Düsseldorf recruiting office files and the Waffen-SS recruits' papers from the records, point toward two issues. Firstly, significant numbers of SS recruits were volunteers. Secondly, the men were subject to considerable transfers and new postings. It is difficult to pinpoint the reason behind such a policy but it raises questions over the combined effects of losses and transfers. Wegner has attributed the end of the principle of the all-volunteer force as a contributory factor in the decline in the Waffen-SS as an elite organisation.<sup>31</sup> However from the assessment of the records of the SS recruiting office in Düsseldorf and the SS

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<sup>29</sup> Table Talk, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1942, p229.

<sup>30</sup> Table Talk, 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> August 194, p19.

<sup>31</sup> Wegner, 1990, pp303-309.



recruitment literature it seems the principle did not completely disappear.<sup>32</sup> The internal volunteering from police to SS was another element of the volunteering spirit that remained constant. Many police officers including Ernst Korn (discussed in chapter seven) even tried to join the Waffen-SS in addition to their membership of the Allgemeine-SS. The SS recruitment literature was full of heroic messages:

When I speak of the infantry, then I want to stress today for the first time the shining example of courageousness, and the hardness of my SS divisions and Police organisation. I always thought of them as indestructible troops, loyal in war as they swore they would be in peacetime.<sup>33</sup>

We SS men of the fighting community (Kampfgemeinschaft) of the SS form a special elite. So following the words of the Führer voluntarily fulfilling ones duty, ensuring the actions of the best never of the average.<sup>34</sup>

Why were young men eager to volunteer for the SS even during the later stages of the war? The simple answer was the promise of lands and farms in the east.<sup>35</sup> Under the banner 'Living as free farmers in the east' the SS recruitment booklet offered the prospect of free land to veteran SS men after the war.<sup>36</sup> It was Romanesque payment for the SS legionnaires and it offered a tangible reward that suited Himmler's ideas of the new order in the east. In terms of its political importance it was of course the physical realisation of Lebensraum.<sup>37</sup> This was not the only time that the concept turned up. In the SS recruitment booklet for members of the Hitler Youth suitably titled *Deine Zukunft* (Your Future), the future veterans were given an elaborate description of the eastern wall. This wall was to be made up of armed farmers who would prevent the Mongol horde from ever reaching the gates of Germany ever again. To further embellish this description of colonies, the British empire was said to have been only a

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<sup>32</sup> BA ZNS, Kornelimünster Personnel Archives.

<sup>33</sup> *Dich ruft die SS*, RFSS, (1943), Adolf Hitler, 26<sup>th</sup> April 1942.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, p77.

<sup>35</sup> The IWM has a paper trail of documents among their collection of Himmler papers that concern the promise of land in the east for collaborators. The series begins with H/19/255 and continues to H/19/320 covering the period June 1942 to January 1944. The correspondence was initiated by Keitel and was intended for collaborators to the Wehrmacht, but after a while the project attracted others including Martin Bormann and the SS leadership. The point to all of this is that land became a main form of recompense easily understood by all the protagonists.

<sup>36</sup> *Deine Zukunft*, RFSS, 1944.

<sup>37</sup> *Dich ruft die SS*, p68.

bureaucratic coloniser while the future German colonies would be flooded with Germans.<sup>38</sup>

The idea of fighting partisans was not disguised from the recruitment process. On the contrary, it was glorified as a necessary task to remove the evils of Bolshevism and the criminality of bandits. The pamphlet 'With the Sicherheitspolizei in the East' offered the prospect of combating murder and plundering by Bolsheviks of the indigenous peoples in the east.<sup>39</sup> In 'The Spooky Forest' (Der unheimliche Wald) the SS candidate was told of the fight against the NKVD and the bandit groups in the forests of the east and the fighting in the camp of the ambushers (Heckenschützenlager).<sup>40</sup> Once candidates volunteered their assignment was random without a pattern. It is impossible to conclude with any certainty what led men to volunteer for the SS.<sup>41</sup>

#### Youth rather than maturity: the spirit behind Bandenbekämpfung

Christopher Browning found that the men of Reserve Police Battalion 101 were largely middle-aged reservists. He also saw that many had links with the Nazi Party as members. The most interesting conclusion from this research concerns the question of the youth of the men involved in Bandenbekämpfung. From the Franco-Prussian War onwards, common opinion has it that German security troops tended to be elderly reservists. Indeed, it was deemed a German army tradition to raise the Landwehr to

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<sup>38</sup> *Deine Zukunft*, RFSS, 1944, *ibid*.

<sup>39</sup> *Dich ruft die SS*, p81.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, p83

<sup>41</sup> From SS personnel records, BA-ZNS, 25/159/3/9: One Waffen-SS volunteer, who spent all his time in the General-Government, working on security duties with the SD. He was first called for mobilisation on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1938 aged 35, he was born on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 1903, and volunteered for the Waffen-SS. His initial posting was to the 4<sup>th</sup> battalion of a SS-Totenkopf Infantry Regiment. The candidate was married with two children and was a business professional with a university education. In 1941 he joined the SS-Reserve Battalion in HSSPF Russland-Nord, and was then transferred to the staff company of the Waffen-SS, under the RSHA in May 1943. Another volunteer for the Waffen-SS was sent, in May 1941, to the 3rd Reserve Police Regiment. This person was also well educated with a family. On the 29<sup>th</sup> April 1942 he was found dead on a trail in Kopikowo (Russia) and buried there. His wife was not told of his death until a year later. Yet another volunteer joined the Waffen-SS on the 29<sup>th</sup> February 1940. He was sent to the 5<sup>th</sup> battalion of the 8<sup>th</sup> SS Infantry Regiment in Warsaw. He was trained as a heavy machine-gunner and then spent the war on occupation duties in Poland. Yet another volunteer, joined the 1st battalion of the 20<sup>th</sup> SS-Police Regiment in Prague, on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 1943. He completed his basic questionnaire (Fragebogen) on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 1943. He had the minimum education and after the RuSHA had passed him on 27<sup>th</sup> January 1943 he was sent to conduct a primary copy writing test: 'Our air force is a strong weapon it is indispensable in war the German air force is the strongest and is the best in the world, it supports the infantry.' Both these candidates had the minimum standards of education. Therefore at this stage it can only be assumed that volunteers and the mobilised were treated in a similar fashion.

handle security duties. This does not seem to have been the case with the armed services in the period after Directive 46. The findings suggest a high proportion of men under thirty, in the main straight from school or within a couple of years of apprenticeship. The introduction of reserve divisions into the security zones, following the Führer Directive 46 in 1942, significantly reduced the age of the German troops.<sup>42</sup> Whether the heightened level of effectiveness had been intended or not it certainly brought its benefits. The number of reports that refer to these units is considerable coming from commanders across many and sometimes unconnected zones:

The reserve division was however made up of younger more dynamic men. Their enthusiasm made up for their lack of experience. Their time on duty (reservists) was between 2 and 3 months.<sup>43</sup>

The forces employed to suppress the Warsaw Ghetto uprising (1943) were quite an unusual mix, from five central manpower sources, according to the casualty returns of the Stroop report (Table 22). The Waffen-SS brought in two reserve battalions based in Warsaw, a panzer-grenadier and a cavalry battalion. The Orpo supplied men from the 22<sup>nd</sup> SS-Polizei Regiment; a detachment of Technische Nothilfe, the Gendarmerie and the Fire Brigade. The main collaboration force was a battalion of Trawniki police. There was also present a detachment of the SD. The Wehrmacht employed a flak battery, an engineer company stationed with the railway troops and a further reserve engineer battalion. The average ages of the German casualties provides an interesting profile of the forces deployed. The Waffen-SS averaged 24 years of age. The eldest being 42 and the youngest 17 years of age from a sample of 64 proving that the bulk of the Waffen-SS were quite young. The police came out with an average age of 31. The oldest at 37 and the youngest at 20 represents confirmation of the general opinion that the Police were recruiting from older manpower. The men employed from the collaboration forces came up with an average age of 26 but the oldest at 51. This again highlights the relative youth of the forces engaged in security:

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<sup>42</sup> This was not a new idea. In the case of the 36<sup>th</sup> Replacement Battalion the age range of troops employed in the Etappe in 1915 came from the age groups 1870 to 1892 (ages between 23 and 45). Armierungs-Bataillon 36, Auszug aus dem Armee-Tagesbefehl 20<sup>th</sup> September 1915, troops ages ranged between 23-45. This replacement battalion had been raised in Duisburg and had 901 men assigned to four companies. It had been involved in fighting within both the 'Etappen und Operationsgebiet'. See IWM German Army Box 3, file number 35849.

<sup>43</sup> Heinz Krampf, FMS, D-257, Protection of the Railroad Lines Brest Litovsk – Gomel and Brest Litovsk – Kovel (1943), (n.d.).

**Table 20: Losses recorded in the Stroop report<sup>44</sup>**

	SS	POLICE	WEHRMACHT	COLLABORATORS
Oldest	42	37	46	51
Average	24	31	33	26
Youngest	17	20	18	19
Total	64	15	4	19

This use of younger soldiers suggests two possibilities in the thinking of the leadership. Firstly, it was useful to introduce young soldiers into conflict by degrees, rather than being thrown into the front line unprepared. Secondly, it is possible that the leadership thought it was less difficult to enforce punitive security measures against civilians with younger soldiers rather than their older comrades. Unfortunately, both surmises remain difficult to substantiate one way or another.

#### **IV. Ausbildung: Bandenbekämpfung Training**

Since it has long been obvious that soldiers find it easier to kill (or risk being killed) when fighting an enemy they hate all modern nations have attempted in one way or another to instil in their soldiers a picture of the enemy sufficiently repugnant or evil to inspire this hatred.<sup>45</sup>

The question of Bandenbekämpfung training has the potential to be an emotive issue. The issue one has to confront is whether the Germans were attempting to build soldiers into policemen or policemen into soldiers. This fundamental problem remains at the heart of the original question of whether the leadership were attempting to create a Staatsschutzkorps, a militarised Nazi police force, or a traditional style colonial police force. The true balance of this analysis lies somewhere between the ideological education of the hardened Nazi officer elites, at one extreme, and the more functional training for short-term foreign auxiliary policemen, at the other. We do not have as yet a comprehensive study of SS-Police training and education and what follows is drawn from the limited evidence surviving in the files. In his ideas for turning the police into a national force Himmler employed some unusual methods to achieve his ends:

For the creation of the Reich police, not only outwardly but also inwardly, I have already made a beginning in the officers' corps and with the officials, by shifting the people some what, through transfers, etc. in this way showing Germany to them; thus my dear Bavarians may come north for a

<sup>44</sup> Jürgen Stroop, 'Es gibt keinen jüdischen Wohnbezirk in Warschau mehr!', published as The Stroop Report, transl. Sybil Milton and introduction by Andrej Wirth, (London, 1980).

<sup>45</sup> Stein, 1966, p127.

change, and the people from the north go south... Transfers are effected on principle only by telegram, that keeps people young and fresh.<sup>46</sup>

SS-Police schooling has had little coverage in the literature, Andrew Mollo has said that by 1943 there were six schools. George Stein argued that the level of killing was achieved in the SS by a mixture of racial indoctrination and by the vilification of the enemy. He suggested the SS-Leithefte (a monthly SS journal) was a source of inspirational and doctrinal reading matter for the troops. For example, in 1943, Himmler wrote to the senior HSSPF officers involved in Bandenbekämpfung recommending 10,000 copies of key works identified for their ideological and educational content.<sup>47</sup> Martin Dean is one of several scholars who have made passing references to training but without elaborating the programme of training other than its anti-Semitic bias.<sup>48</sup> The problem of training included the large numbers of foreign language recruits and how this cultural problem overcome. The opening of training schools was a major thrust even during the war (see table 20 and the list for Waffen-SS schools). The most notable was the leader school of the SD and SIPO in Berlin. We have some idea of how they were trained from the testimony of one SD officer who served in the east and in the Rhineland. His training in the leadership school was balanced between schoolroom classes and field training. They were particularly trained to shoot with pistols and rifles; during 1942, this training course lasted for six months. The Police weapons training school regularly distributed notices of its specialist classes and proficiency courses.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> IWM, IMT, 1992-A-PS, op cit.

<sup>47</sup> BA MA, RS3 36/1b, books for the men of Bandenbekämpfung, 18. 11. 1943, RFSS General Order. Hitler originally recommended the book by Prawdin to Himmler in 1942. Michael Prawdin, *Tschingis-Chan und sein Erbe*, Franz Graf Zedtwitz, Feldmunster; Henrik Herse *Wehr dich Garde, der Bauer kommt*; Georg Schmilke Heinrich, *König und Kaiser*; Thilo Schneller, *Klaus Störtebeker*; Zdenko von Kraft, Hans Zoeberlain, *Der Glaube an Deutschland*; Hanns Johst, *Maske und Gesicht*; Friedrich Giese, *Die Wagenburg*; Werner Jansen, *Das Buch Treue* and Josefa Berenstotenohl *Der Femhof*.

<sup>48</sup> Martin C. Dean, The German Gendarmerie, the Ukrainian Schutzmannschaft and the 'Second Wave' of Jewish Killings in Occupied Ukraine: German Policing at the Local Level in Zhitomir Region, 1941-1944, in *German History*, 1996, Vol.14, No.2, pp 168-192. In this article Dean refers to the training of Schutzmannschaft in the occupied territories with schools managed by branches of the police, in this case the Gendarmeries. He also pointed out the racial nature of the training curriculum and in particular the attention given to anti-Semitism.

<sup>49</sup> T354, Roll 648, for the course on weapons I-III, Chef der Ordnungspolizei, 21<sup>st</sup> October 1943.

**Table 21: The Waffen-SS specialist schools and training units (1942 and 1943)**

INSTITUTIONS IN 1942	HOME DEPOT		INSTITUTIONS IN 1943	HOME DEPOT
SS- Armed Geological Battalion	Hamburg		SS-Armed Geological Btl.	Hamburg
SS-Junkerschule	Tolz		SS-Junkerschule	Tolz
SS-Junkerschule	Braunschweig		SS-Junkerschule	Braunschweig
SS Medical Academy	Graz		SS Medical Academy	Graz
SS Artillery School 1	Glau		SS Artillery School 1	Glau
SS Artillery School 2	Beneschau		SS Artillery School 2	Beneschau
SS Driving school	Apeldoorn		SS Driving school	Apeldoorn
SS Driving school	Krakau		SS Driving school	Krakau
SS Driving school	Schrottersburg		SS-Btl. SS Tr. Ub. Pl.	Debica
SS Pioneer School	Beneschau		SS Pioneer Schule	Beneschau
SS Vehicle technical school	Vienna		SS Vehicle technical school	Oranienburg
SS NCO school	Radolfzell		SS NCO school	Radolfzell
SS NCO school	Lauenberg		SS NCO school	Lauenberg
SS NCO school	Posen-Treskau		SS NCO school	Posen-Treskau
Signals school of the Waffen-SS	Metz		Signals of the Waffen-SS	Metz
Veterinary offices	Warsaw		Veterinary Offices	Warsaw
Horse and riding school	Zamosc		Horse and riding school	Zamosc
SS Panzer Grenadier School	Prosetschnitz		SS Pz. Gren Schule	Prosetschnitz
High mountain school	Stubaital (Tirol)		SS Panzer Grenadier School	Stubaital (Tirol)
Weapons technical department	Munchen-Dachau		Weapons technical department	Munchen-Dachau
Music school	Braunschweig		Musikschule	Braunschweig
Medical orderly school	Dachau		Sanitatschule	Dachau
SS bureaucrat school	Dachau		SS bureaucrat school	Dachau
Home horse paddock	Kilice		Home horse paddock	Kilice
Main veterinary school	Warsaw		Main veterinary school	Warsaw
Home horse hospital	Radom		Home horse hospital	Radom

In several surviving sets of lecture notes from the Wehrmachtakademie the subject matter included the preparation for war, the question of Poland, two-front war and the Schlieffen Plan.<sup>50</sup> How far the army differed from the SS is difficult to establish. They studied the need to be both psychologically and economically prepared for war. The cadet and specialist military schools also contained a high level of political and ideological indoctrination. One file relating to a pioneer school was concerned with 'The Wehrmacht and the Jewish Question'. Some surviving lecture notes from the Munich War School were conducted on a course entitled National political lessons, tutored by Oberst Gareis between 1937 and 1940. The course studied three repeat themes, 1st January: Der Prozess gegen die Frankfurter Juden (The trial of the Frankfurt Jews), 1st August: Rassepolitik (Race politics) and the 1st September, Die Judenfrage (The Jewish Question):

The National-Socialist fight for the protection and the public health of the race: The blood protection laws forbid the marriage between Jews and German blood. It aims at the pure preservation of the German blood.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup> BA MA RH13/v.4, Wehrmachtsakademie Nr. 266/36 g.k. Berlin 5 May 1936, pp 17, 19 and 85.

<sup>51</sup> BA MA RH17/ v.2, p5 and p28.

### Field training

Another example of ‘abnormal’ warfare in the east is General Max von Schenckendorff’s ‘Course for combating partisans’, held in Mogilev between 24-26 September 1941...Schenckendorff not only sanctioned the SS methods but tried to get a course of training going between the branches of security. Lecture by Bach-Zelewski on catching commissars and partisans and Nebe on the Jewish question. The 7th Company of the 322nd Police Battalion then showed how the screening of civilians should be conducted.<sup>52</sup>

On the 16<sup>th</sup> September 1941, General of Infantry, Max von Schenckendorff, announced that he was organising a field anti-partisan course.<sup>53</sup> The course ‘Bekämpfung von Partisanen’ was conducted in the grand casino of Mogilev, and had an intensive three day schedule. The course was intended for a selection of regimental and battalion officers in Schenckendorff’s rear area corps (note appendix 3 for a list of participants). The words of Schenckendorff’s opening address do not suggest that he was a fanatical anti-Semite or that he totally believed in the links between the Jews and the partisan. On the other hand his opening address and handout to the attendees does suggest a pseudo-scholarly assessment of Bolshevik militarism and the partisan. While there is no open evidence of anti-Semitism he was clearly anti-Bolshevik and certainly avidly anti-partisan from a military context. This emphasis on eradication raises a certain amount of interest as to how he would conduct actions.<sup>54</sup>

Having initiated the idea Schenckendorff became leader of the course and was responsible for its speakers and the subject matter. The organiser of the course was Lieutenant Colonel Montua, the commander of Police Regiment Centre. Officers listed to speak were given fifteen minutes to refer to their experiences and performance. This was followed by a group discussion of another fifteen minutes. The itinerary for the morning of the first day covered the operational practises from the commanding general down to battalion level. There was some intelligence information presented on Russian organisational methods and tactical handling of the partisans. After three and a half

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<sup>52</sup> Förster, 1994, pp95-96.

<sup>53</sup> BA MA, RW41 and NA Roll T501, Korpesbefehl Nr. 53, Erfahrungsaustausch (Kampf gegen Partisanen), 16<sup>th</sup> September 1941.

<sup>54</sup> TVDB, p.80, date of entry 9<sup>th</sup> July 1943. Certainly Schenckendorff and Bach-Zelewski visited the 322<sup>nd</sup> Police Battalion together during its operations clearing Jews from the Bialystok area. There can be no doubt about his knowledge of its operations. Indeed the links between Bach-Zelewski and Schenckendorff were very strong; on the latter’s death the former wrote glowing words of praise suggesting he had been a ‘fatherly friend’ (väterlicher Freund).

hours they broke off for lunch. Then in the afternoon, the course took on the appearance of a school field trip, as they climbed aboard a bus to visit a village in the area of Mogilev. There they observed the 9<sup>th</sup> Company of Police Regiment Centre conduct a security exercise that included the establishment of control points and the distribution of political propaganda leaflets to villagers. They then conducted a search exercise in the forests to show how a hunt - described as an animal hunt - should be conducted. After nearly three hours they climbed back on board the bus and prepared for the evening's entertainment. Ironically, in the evening they were entertained in the conservatory, serenaded by a Russian folk music ensemble.

On the morning of the second day Bach-Zelewski lectured on the partisan and the political commissar, and restated the Barbarossa Order for their immediate execution upon capture. This lasted thirty minutes, after lunch he discussed the value of the V-Leute (collaborators working for the Germans within Russian communities or behind Russian lines). SD General Nebe, the local commander of Einsatzgruppen killing operations spoke for half an hour on the first day, on the subject of the SD in the fight against the partisan, and for half an hour on the second, solely on the 'Jewish question'. Then Hans Tesmer, Chief of the Military Government Department (Chef der Kriegsverwaltungs-Abteilung VII), talked for thirty minutes on the question of the civilian population in the handling of the partisan problem. Tesmer was a senior SS officer and a member of the Reinhard Heydrich's Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA) and a former colleague of General Nebe; he was posted to von Schenckendorff's staff and was responsible for all civilian matters.<sup>55</sup>

From a technical standpoint, the partisan course covered such routine themes of road and railway patrols. The discussion on partisan weapons included the analysis of specific devices such as the Schalldämpfer (gun-silencer) and the practical methods disposing of Soviet mines. There was also study of techniques in operations in built up areas and conducting searches of living quarters. On the final day of the course they travelled by bus to visit the 2<sup>nd</sup> Security Regiment conduct an anti-partisan operation.

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<sup>55</sup> Himmler deliberately made available SS leaders for top positions in the administrations of regions under military government; among other examples that can be cited were Werner Best (France), Eggert Reeder (Belgium-North France) and Harald Turner (Serbia). See Herbert, 1996, pp.251-322; Christopher Browning, 'Harald Turner und die Militärverwaltung in Serbien 1941-1942' in Dieter Rebenisch and Karl Teppe (eds), *Verwaltung contra Menschenführung im Staat Hitlers. Studien zum politisch-administrativen System*, (Göttingen 1986), pp351-373



The plan included digging out (Aushebung) partisans, commissars and communists from a pre-planned area. If the subject was not so horrific, there is the almost comic vision of some of the most senior officers responsible for German security all climbing on a bus to take a tour of anti-partisan warfare. One surviving paper suggests they were still conducting the exercise at 4.00am, presumably expecting to meet partisans, south of Mogilev on the road to Gomel. By 8.00am, four hours later, it was all over, breakfast was served and the course concluded.

Several files of the Wehrmachtsbefehlshaber Weissruthenien (effectively Army Group Centre rear area), commanded by General of Cavalry von Rothkirch (Schenckendorff's successor), have remained intact and cover the final period of German occupation in Russia in 1943-44. The files demonstrate the remarkable synergy between military bureaucracy and security within the German Army. In the period December 1943 to May 1944, Rothkirch's staff to concentrated on three levels of activity. Firstly, the continuation of the training programmes at the Bandenschule (established in Smolensk); secondly, the reporting of partisan incidents and the recording of details of such activities, and finally the preparation for the programme of the Nazi indoctrination programme for troops in the field (NSFO). Rothkirch reminded his officers of their duty and their power to use the law to maintain discipline. He circulated a letter from the army group commander:

The hard front fighting demands security of good supply and the necessity to secure the routes against the bandits. By all troops in the army and other organisations in the Bandenbekämpfung are to be active in the fight. This battle will give support for the front. In this context I especially direct Bandenbekämpfung measures for trains and roads, bridges and buildings to be secured. The snowfall restricts movement and forces bandits to take shelter in villages and bunkers. Regional operations to seek the bandit in their camps and in hiding are as important as immediate action and counter-attack of the Jagdkommando following tracks in the snow to destroy bandits.

All units must seek for tracks and make far reaching use of the snow. The concentration of forces and the actions of all possible forces in the Bandenkampf and the security service and alarm units to the maximum of their ability. Even the special troops and organisations and also the organisation of the Bandit information service in all places and by all troops must be checked and improved. It is important not to lose time. All operations are to cooperate with Luftwaffe Commander I. All troop leaders and village commanders are to be made aware of this order. In the reports

for January the army's commanding generals of security troops, the commander in Weissruthenien must report all actions regularly.

Signed Busch<sup>56</sup>

On the 7<sup>th</sup> January 1944, the rear area of Army Group centre was maintaining the system of field training. There was an allowance made in the budget for a Bandenschule. The organisation of the bandit-school can be found in Table 21. OKH had made the school at the disposal of all troops. The intention was to use small groups qualified in the methods of Bandenbekämpfung, while being attached to a weapons school of the army. The teaching staff consisted of three officers and four assistant instructors.<sup>57</sup> The numbers involved can be seen in the diagrammatical breakdown of the school. There is some indication of how the Field Bandit School took a hold on procedural thinking within the German security system in the surviving records.<sup>58</sup>

**Table 22: The organisation of the Bandenschule (1944)<sup>59</sup>**

GROUP COMMANDANT	OFFICERS	NCO	MAN	PISTOL	MP	RIFLE
Commander	1			1	1	
Driver			1	1		
Motorcyclist			1	1		
Training group – Bandit- school						
Training Officers	2			2	2	
Assistant trainer		1		1		
Assistant trainer		2		2		
Assistant trainer			3			3
Training group – Combat Engineer- school						
Training Officers	1			1		
Assistant trainer		1		1		
Assistant trainer		2		2		
Assistant trainer			2			2
Administration						
Warrant Officer		1		1		
Schreiber		1				1
Bookkeeper		1				1
Equipment NCO for Bandit-School		1				1
Weapons-master-helper		1		1		
Medical orderly		1		1		
1. Cook		1				1
2. Cook			1			1
Driver			1	1		
Tailor			1 Hiwi			
Shoe-maker			1 Hiwi			
Barber or hairdresser			1			1
Reporting hairdressing			1			1
Responsible for the Hiwi		1		1		
River ferry men			3 Hiwi			
Building work and putting up targets			12 Hiwi			

<sup>56</sup> BA MA, RW41/60, Busch, Obkdo.H.Gr.Mitte, Ia Nr.15 598/43 g.Kdos, December 1943.

<sup>57</sup> BA MA, RW41/76, 7<sup>th</sup> January 1944 diary entry p20.

<sup>58</sup> BA MA, RW41/76, rear-area commander in the Soviet Union (1944 Period Of Occupation in The Ukraine) and RW41/75, armed forces commander Ukraine; renaming the area Ukraine from Weissruthenien.

<sup>59</sup> BA MA, RW41/76, 7<sup>th</sup> January 1944 diary entry p20.

On the 31<sup>st</sup> May 1944 Army Group Centre had called its rear area headquarters and stated that the forthcoming course would be attended by instructors from 9<sup>th</sup> Army. The next day it was reported that the army school for guerrilla warfare had not yet received its teachers and instructors. By the 3<sup>rd</sup> June Rothkirch's staff began to panic since the first course was set to begin on the 11<sup>th</sup> June, leaving only a short time to prepare. Later, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1944, it was stated that the 9<sup>th</sup> Army-sponsored course could only begin on the 15<sup>th</sup> June. Therefore, the rear area combed out five of its own officers, who were given orders to volunteer to advise on fighting tactics by the Russians and bandits. Then tragedy befell the course, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1944 at 11.30am, when Major Schoen, commander of the army school, Major Wawzinek, police specialist for guerrilla warfare, were both wounded by a Soviet mine. This embarrassing failure of the leaders of the school, and especially the course leader, was particularly painful for Rothkirch. On the 28<sup>th</sup> June the school was ordered to close down and transfer to Lida. The Soviet offensive, Operation Bagration, was already on the point of reaching this city while the order was being typed, whereupon the file ended with no further commentary. The continuation of teaching programmes for *Bandenbekämpfung* in similar kinds of school format for police troops, continued into the early months of 1945.

## **V. Performance and discipline**

The handling of disciplinary problems by Himmler and Bach-Zelewski bear comparison. Gauging performance is again difficult to evaluate from the surviving records. One has to distinguish between the letters of congratulation for a regiment's performance in the field, or the commendations for a field commander, and discover what was expected as institutional norms. The general standard as far as one can tell was for the officers and men to always act in a soldierly fashion. This required men when called upon to follow orders implicitly. It also meant that the *Bandenbekämpfung* forces within any given security zone might be called upon to handle everything from minor acts of terrorism, to full-scale partisan insurgency or breakthroughs by frontline Red Army forces. In such situations the policemen were rarely adequately trained or equipped to contain the Red Army. If their performance in *Bandenbekämpfung* had been successful, it did not mitigate against failure at the hands of the Red Army. This of course placed another burden upon the responsibilities of the middle-ranking police

officers. These problems could be magnified for the commanders of largely foreign troops with their minimal training and poor equipment.

#### Himmler and the 14<sup>th</sup> SS-Police Regiment

The case of the 14<sup>th</sup> SS-Police Regiment represents an interesting and brief study of how success in Bandenbekämpfung was no substitute for frontline military effectiveness. The 14<sup>th</sup> SS-Police Regiment was one of the two police regiments that had been part of Bach-Zelewski's special force established in October 1942. What we know of the regiment comes from the papers of Himmler's Personal Staff, entries in Bach-Zelewski's war diary and a letter in his SS personnel file. This case highlights what might happen to units that failed. However, this was not just a case of failure in combat, but an example of military incompetence.

Bach-Zelewski had had a strong relationship to the regiment when it first came under his command in 1942. On the 9<sup>th</sup> August 1942, the regiment destroyed a bandit group in a forest near Kutschin. There was a fight with hand-grenades with a Jew and a commissar reported killed. Bach-Zelewski offered his reconnaissance aeroplane to carry four of the regiment's wounded to a field hospital. Bach-Zelewski hosted a coffee meeting, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1942, for the first battalion's officers. From the 24<sup>th</sup> October 1942, Bach-Zelewski retained command of the regiment in his new guise as Bevollmächtigter des Reichsführers SS für Bandenbekämpfung. He met with the regimental commander, Lieutenant Colonel Buchmann, on the 31<sup>st</sup> October, regarding an operation in conjunction with the Dirlewanger Brigade. In November he had tried to visit the regiment, but the engine failed on his Storch aeroplane and the staff car was forced back due to poor road conditions. On the 7<sup>th</sup> November, the first battalion, 14<sup>th</sup> Police Regiment, stormed and captured a partisan camp northwest of Sluzk following 34 hours of continuous fighting. The battalion lost 18 policemen and a tank. In a reference to this fighting on the 10<sup>th</sup> November, the battalion lost 17 killed and an undetermined number of wounded. The regiment remained in action until the 13<sup>th</sup> November when it was transferred to Minsk in preparation for Operation München. On the 15<sup>th</sup> November, Bach-Zelewski noted the officers of the Regiment had a particularly hard day. On the 16<sup>th</sup> November, he arranged the White Ruthenian Theatre in Minsk to be made available to the men of the regiment. The regiment first became involved in

deportations of forced labour on the 17<sup>th</sup> November. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> February, the First Battalion of the regiment took part in a reprisal action (Vergeltungsaktion) in the area of Bobruisk-Mogilev, shooting 463 partisans and suspects, arresting 1,834 forced labourers, capturing food stuffs and 193 horses while destroying 2 bandit camps, for the cost of 2 wounded. At the time it was being assisted by an unnamed Polish Schutzmannschaft battalion, that was in the same area

In January 1943, four police regiments (6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and the 15<sup>th</sup>) were destroyed as cohesive formations in military operations. The surviving personnel were dispersed into other formations, or used to build new regiments and battalions. The officers were not always given the opportunity to carry on as usual without disciplinary proceedings being brought against them for military incompetence. The main charge against the 14<sup>th</sup> SS-Police Regiment was poor performance while under attack from an inferior force, witnessed by the 8<sup>th</sup> Italian Army, with formal complaints made by the Army chief of staff. It was a therefore a political disaster and the consequences were severe for its commanders. Some time in January 1943 the 14<sup>th</sup> SS Police Regiment found itself operating near or under the command of the German 385<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. They were both fighting in close proximity to the 8<sup>th</sup> Italian Army, according to the reports, received by the army chief of staff and later addressed with the RFSS:

The regiment performed badly, allowing itself to be surrounded and only escaped after discarding most of its equipment. It then took up a defensive position where it employed primitive tactics and preparedness; it was surprised and defeated by two Russian companies.<sup>60</sup>

Lieutenant Colonel Buchmann seems to have been killed some time between 17<sup>th</sup> December 1942 and the 11<sup>th</sup> March 1943, although the Chef der Orpo still maintained a file on him in June 1943 and listed as missing. In April 1943 Himmler requested the papers on the regiment prior to his trip to pass his congratulations to the Waffen-SS at Kharkhov. Bach-Zelewski wrote to Kurt Dalwege in which he stated that the problem of the 14<sup>th</sup> Police Regiment had been his responsibility. He felt that its failure was a burden, which had caused him great pain. He admitted to having raised the regiment

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<sup>60</sup> NA and IWM, RFSS papers, Chef des Generalstabes des Heeres, Auszug: aus einem Bericht des Ia der 365 JD über die Kämpfe bei der 8. italienischen Armee, 23 März 1943.

from its baptism of fire and had remained close to its commander Colonel Buchmann.<sup>61</sup> Meanwhile, Himmler issued a further order (6th May 1943):

I employ the SS police-court Berlin with the orders for preliminary proceedings of a court martial against the regimental-commander and battalion-commanders because of insubordination and poor service in the field, as far as these commanders still live. I retain the final decision in this procedure before me. When it comes to the official proceedings I will decide the final make-up of the court. I request immediate notification, of which Regimental officers are still alive.<sup>62</sup>

The official listing as to those still alive and able to attend a court martial were contained in a further report of the 17<sup>th</sup> June 1943.<sup>63</sup> The Chief of the SS legal department, SS Police court in Berlin were instructed to handle the case. It is not clear what happened to these men. Certainly, there was no attempt by Bach-Zelewski to defend them; Himmler, was determined to punish even the junior officers. The dispersal of the officers to other regiments was the classical method of managing failure.

#### Bach-Zelewski and the 53<sup>rd</sup> Schuma Battalion (1942)

The problems of the 53<sup>rd</sup> Schuma Battalion represent an unusual case. There had been a stream of accusations against the SS of plunder and criticism had been levelled by the Feldkommandantur of the area (said to be in the rear area of Army Group Centre). The Ortskommandantur had gone over the head of Schenckendorff and complained directly to the Army Group Centre Quartermaster-general Mosster, about the SS and especially the SS infantry Brigade. Bach-Zelewski's investigations proved the partisans were behind this.<sup>64</sup> Bach-Zelewski began his report by referring to the behaviour of the local

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<sup>61</sup> NA, SS personnel file, Bach-Zelewski letter to Kurt Daluge, 8<sup>th</sup> January 1943.

<sup>62</sup> NA, IWM, RFSS papers, letter of the 6<sup>th</sup> May 1943.

<sup>63</sup> IWM RFSS papers, list of surviving or notified dead officers of the regiment by the Hauptamt Ordnungspolizei to Himmler 17<sup>th</sup> June 1943: Regiment: Kdr. Buchmann missing 17.12.42; Replacement commander (14.1 to 1.2.43) – Oberstleutnant der Schutzpolizei Peter in the Berlin state hospital; Adjutant – Hauptmann Heissing, was in Stuttgart; K-Offizier – Hauptmann Francke, Berlin; 2<sup>nd</sup> Armoured vehicle company, Hauptmann Gerhard Buth, 2<sup>nd</sup> Polizei. Panzer company in Vienna. Kdr. 1/ Police. 14: Major d.SchP Walkhoff, killed 19.12.1942; Major d.SchP Langbehn replacement no longer the commander; Adjutant – Oberleutnant Vinzenz Sedlak, in Stuttgart; 3. Company – Hauptmann Emil Morawietz, (Hamburg), with I/SS.Police in Czechoslovakia. Kdr. II/Police 14: Hauptmann Riefel was already with II/SS.Police 15 in Norway. Kdr III/14: Major Grimm am 17.12.43 killed; Hauptmann Blankenhorn is no longer with the battalion; Adjutant – Hauptmann Johannes Schöne, with II/ SS Police Regt 15; K-staffel – Oberleutnant Karl Jung, II/ SS Police 15; 9<sup>th</sup> Company, commander, Oberleutnant Werner Altman, adjutant to Generalmajor Grunwald in Hauptamt Orpo; Zugführer – Leutnant Erich Falkenberg with Hipo (Hilfspolizei) Batl. VI Serbia; 11<sup>th</sup> Company – Oberleutnant Georg Schmidt, Worms.

<sup>64</sup> TVDB, p71.

Ortskommandantur a major in the army who had been critical of the SS in his area. All sides were taking food but when the SS had done this it had been called plunder. Details of a partisan attack in the area were given to the major who worked in a community that supported the Germans. The major was the first person killed in the attack. The 53<sup>rd</sup> had revolted in the attack and worked against the Germans.

Bach-Zelewski stated that he had already spoken to both Schenckendorff and Himmler about the problems of this unit. The problems he identified were:

- The continuing German retreat was undermining morale;
- Bolshevism was seen as returning;
- Thus Soviet propaganda was working for the bandits against the people;
- The belief in Bolshevism was becoming an alibi.

Bach-Zelewski stated that these problems had begun amongst the Wehrmacht Osttruppen and that Schenckendorff had suppressed this problem. This had become a regular problem in Weissruthenien (Byelorussia). There had to be a sifting out of rotten elements and floaters amongst the troops. The Schuma Battalions could not be granted their own authority and kept in close proximity to the German forces. This also raised a concern for those Schuma units holding isolated defensive positions. The operations officer of the Army Group Centre rear area had ignored these problems, but Bach-Zelewski endorsed the error on grounds of military necessity. The difficult situation of the front had seen the removal of troops from the rear and the remaining Wehrmacht units had been concentrated on guarding the railways. Coming to the incident, Bach-Zelewski referred to the ability of the partisan leaders who clearly understood the German procedures in the Mogilev area. This raised a question of the nature of covert activities in the area that he was going to continue to investigate. Meanwhile the partisans had placed two officers amongst the 53<sup>rd</sup> Schuma Battalion. They had formed a communist cell and thus, before the incident in question, they had taken control of the battalion. They had taken over large numbers of guns and ammunition.<sup>65</sup>

## VI. Summary

As long as anti-Jewish measures were perceived and construed as military measures against Germany's enemies, it did not require nazified zealots (though surely such were not lacking), merely conscientious and politically

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<sup>65</sup> TVDB, pp71-72.

obtuse soldiers to carry them out.<sup>66</sup>

The findings from this chapter do not conform to the time worn assumptions that the Germans employed old or middle-aged reservists for security duties. These changes had been taking place since the First World War, as more younger men were assigned to security duties. Generally, the men assigned to *Bandenbekämpfung* were young and who received training in the field. This outcome was a triumph for the innovation and flexibility of the SS-Police leadership. At the same time the army was able to continue its methods albeit under the nominal command of the SS. This resulted in an effective balance of forces. The changes brought about a highly motivated force of men from different branches of the SS-Police establishment and the *Wehrmacht*. In practical terms there was a deep concern amongst the commanders over the maintenance of discipline, adequate training and combat preparedness. There were breakdowns in discipline or through overwhelming forces, but these incidents were largely exceptional. On the whole, given the scale of the forces deployed, the Nazis had constructed a highly effective manpower pool for security duties.

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<sup>66</sup> Förster, 1994, pp 96-97.



### **Chapter Six: Bandenbekämpfung and Total War**

Until 1943 the Germans were generally successful in maintaining Rear Area Security in Russia. Only when Germany suffered defeats at the front did the problems of maintaining lines of communication become a severe strain. Yet it was not until the final months of the war on the eastern front that there was anything like a complete disruption of the German Rear Areas, and this was hardly surprising given the circumstances.... If the controllers of German intelligence and counter-espionage had been more professional themselves, and if there had been better co-ordination and efficiency, then the disruption of German Rear Areas would have been an even more formidable task for partisans and saboteurs.... Thus the German control over their Rear Areas was due in no small part to strong discipline, maintained where necessary by draconian measures against soldier and civilian alike.<sup>1</sup>

Timothy Mulligan identified 1942-43 as the stage in the war when the Nazis instituted policy and organisational reform in the east. He discussed the internal contradictions between Nazi occupation politics and anti-partisan policy. Research into the anti-partisan campaign has misconstrued how far security policy reflected this confusion.<sup>2</sup> Broad and inconsistent explanations of poor organisation, unbridled killing, few resources and augmentation of genocide, have not answered fundamental questions about the security system. One particularly important issue concerns policy and organisation of the SS in the last two to three years of the war. The late war changes in the SS leadership brought about, not only the end of 1930s orthodoxy, but a new heightened fanaticism. Mulligan suggested the failure to bring the anti-partisan policy under some form of political control resulted in its complete disaster. He had misunderstood that German security policy had been under one form of political control, or another, since 1941 and that it was a function of Berlin rather than local decision-making. Mulligan was unable to explain the dynamics once responsibility for anti-partisan warfare was transferred from the army to the SS, in 1942.<sup>3</sup> This political act signified that Bandenbekämpfung was the Nazi response in the battle of wills against Stalinism.

Gerhard Weinberg proposed an alternative opinion and concluding that 1943 required further academic investigation. Weinberg believed, with some justification,

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<sup>1</sup> Simpson, 1976, p45-46

<sup>2</sup> Cooper, 1977, Dixon & Heilbrunn, 1954.

<sup>3</sup> Timothy Mulligan, *The Politics of Illusion and Empire: German Occupation Policy in the Soviet Union, 1942-1943*, (1988), chapter 10.

that the failure of Stalingrad had been reversed by German counter-offensives. This had led to a realignment of the eastern front, which in turn had given the Germans the opportunity for a last major offensive, Operational Citadel. Within Germany, there was a glimmer of opposition in the White Rose movement in Munich. The U-boat war was gradually being turned against Germany and the allied bombing of cities was at last having a major social and economic impact. Under these circumstances, Weinberg concluded that this was the time of the largest extermination of Jews because the wartime conditions offered the Nazis the last opportunity to do so:

This changed approach is apparent in the German killing operations of the fall of 1943. A significant part of these operations was referred to by the Germans by the *Erntefest* (Harvest Festival), clearly a reference to this being seen as the killing of the last remnants of Jewish communities in central Poland. When murdering 42,000 Jews in three massacres in the Lublin area during a few days in November 1943, the Germans made certain to catch their victims completely by surprise and returned to the procedure of mass shootings, which had characterised the early stages of the killing program in 1941.<sup>4</sup>

This argument has its merits but there were constraints on the Germans brought about by shortages in resources due to overstretch of commitments. The need to rapidly conclude the liquidation of the Jews had become the central goal of the security strategy from June 1943. This strategy caused a reorganisation of the security forces that in turn reflected a radicalisation of doctrine. This chapter identifies the changes in the war that led to the final bureaucratic conclusion of a Nazi security doctrine.

## **I. The Strategic Concept: Festung Europa**

I would like to give it a name: it is the great fortress Europe... The fortress of Europe with its frontiers must be held and will be held too, as long as is necessary...<sup>5</sup>

Hitler's strategy following the defeat at Stalingrad turned toward a combination of aggressive and defensive warfare. The central mission was to hold on to the occupied territories coupled with an intensification of economic exploitation, through an intensified security programme and strategic counter-offensives. The evidence indicates

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<sup>4</sup> Gerhard L. Weinberg, *Germany, Hitler and World War II*, (New York, 1995), pp228-229. There was some correlation between the choice of operational codename and the season.

<sup>5</sup> NA, IMT, 1919PS, Kharkov Speech, Himmler to the commanders of the Waffen-SS, April 1943.

Hitler was no longer differentiating between fronts in terms of security, but recognised one internal zone. He viewed the security question primarily in broad political terms, rather than as a specific anti-partisan issue, or what would be called today a counter-insurgency campaign. This emphasis on internal security measures in the occupied zones was to bolster the war effort through political and economic means. Hitler was also concerned with maintaining the Axis alliance in Europe; 'The Führer is firmly determined to see to it that Italy does not betray the German Reich a second time.'<sup>6</sup> To achieve some of these ends he had already reinterpreted the laws of warfare, the effects of which were being instituted into the armed forces.<sup>7</sup> Through his insistence that these measures remained secret, Hitler had firmly placed his security policy into the process of genocide and ethnic cleansing. Thus, from 1943 Nazi security policy took the form of a national security policy, on the continental level, to ensure Germany remained in the war.

#### Policy and speeches: 'Totaler Krieg- Kürzerer Krieg'

If 1942, was the year of rationalisation, then 1943 was the year of fanatical National Socialist fervour. The final end of Stalingrad coincided with the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Nazi takeover of power in Germany. To commemorate Hitler gave a proclamation to the German people, on the 30<sup>th</sup> January 1943. He began by reminding the German people of the aims, direction and the eventual benefits of winning the war. They were reminded of the eternal struggle of National Socialism that, since 1933, had been directed toward the building a stronger Germany. The Jews, he declared, had been Germany's downfall in the Great War and they remained the greatest enemy. After a certain amount of rambling about his early victories in both politics and the war, he verbally cast them aside as insignificant to the immediate struggle against Bolshevism. This war, he continued, was about the prevention of the Mongol horde from reinvading Europe. It was a fight to retain Europe's culture and to stay the hand of barbarism. Initially the war had been Germany's alone but now he professed it to be in the interest of all Europe. His conclusion was blunt, there were to be no winners in this war only the survivors. The survivors, Nazi or Bolshevik, would grow stronger and dictate the future. It was, he

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<sup>6</sup> Goebbels, 1948, p325.

<sup>7</sup> There was a growing list that included British commandos, American special forces, Soviet partisans in full Red Army uniform, the uniformed guerrilla army of Tito and resistance movements across Europe.

reiterated, 'a war that would see the final end of "Jewry", 'no longer would nations be infected with its curse.'<sup>8</sup>

The first to respond to Hitler's speech and the rising sense of doom that pervaded the regime was Josef Goebbels. His speech of the 18<sup>th</sup> February 1943, called for *Totaler Krieg- Kürzerer Krieg* (total but shortened war). This often-overlooked superlative to the slogan was the psychological hinge that smoothed the way for Nazi ideological offensive war effort. The high command of the army distributed copies, on the 14<sup>th</sup> March 1943, of a general order on the handling of Eastern European peoples. The order combined an interpretation of Goebbels speech, with redefined aims of the Russian campaign and instructions for the improved treatment of occupied peoples. It also included a call to arms for a united (occupied) Europe to join in the crusade against Jewish-Bolshevism. The army wished to reintegrate the peoples of the east with those of the west. In doing so it stressed that German propaganda had to be focused towards the Russian community, explaining why their defeat was in everyone's interest; in other words the defeat of Bolshevism not Russian culture.<sup>9</sup>

It was a remarkably naive order, following three years of barbaric warfare initiated and practised by the Germans. The people of the east were to be no longer insulted; it was unacceptable to refer to them as 'beasts' and 'barbarians'. Stalin and the Bolsheviks were identified as the enemies of both the Russian and German people alike. The army wanted to disguise the continual exploitation of the economy by reducing derogatory remarks toward the Russian people and especially references to them being the European 'Negro'. The long-term oppression of the Russian people following German victory was a taboo subject. There was to be a reduction in building new German settlements. The emphasis was placed on improving the Russian's willingness to work, while the policy of Germanisation was to be suspended and plundering ended (presumably an attempt by the army wind-down *Lebensraum*). The volunteers in the security and armed forces were to be praised as valuable to the German war effort. The rebuilding of the east would be furnished by German materials and manpower, for the good of both occupier and occupied. Ultimately all troops in the east were warned not to

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<sup>8</sup> NA, T312, roll 18, frames 4758799-4758803, Proklamation des Führers, 30<sup>th</sup> January 1943. His only reference to Stalingrad was that the survivors should remember the sacrifice of the German dead (the heroes of the Volga).

<sup>9</sup> NA T354, roll 650, frames 00294 to 00284, Behandlung der europäischen Völker, OKH Nr II/1321/43 geh. Received by the Schutzmannschaft-Art-Abt. 56 on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1943.

be harsh or ruthless toward the locals, remembering that such activity endangered the prospects of final victory.

It seems Himmler was either not told of this order or he chose to ignore it. By April 1943, the eastern front had been stabilised largely by the Waffen-SS inspired tactical victory at Kharkov. The panzer divisions had projected daring and their commander had won the battle despite ignoring Hitler's orders. In recompense Himmler chose to make speeches as a reward for these battle hardened veterans. The speech had all the hallmarks of that given in Metz in 1940, referred to in chapter three. It reinforced Hitler's war aims, the mission of defending fortress Europe. Through a combination of security and genocide. Parallel to the army's ideas it was another doctrinal contradiction that was to place Nazi operations in 1943, on a plateau between fanaticism and realism:

The decision, therefore lies here in the East; here must the Russian enemy, this people numbering two hundred million Russians, be destroyed on the battlefield and person by person, and made to bleed to death...Anti-semitism is exactly the same as delousing. Getting rid of lice is not a question of ideology. It is a matter of cleanliness... We shall soon be deloused. We have only 20,000 lice left, and then the matter is finished within the whole of Germany.... We have only one task, to stand firm and carry on the racial struggle without mercy.<sup>10</sup>

### The Impact of the Warsaw Ghetto

The Warsaw Ghetto uprising (20<sup>th</sup> April to 16<sup>th</sup> May 1943), was the heroic outcome of the Jewish community's stand against transportation to SS death camps. For the SS it was typical Bandenbekämpfung bringing to bear the full array of its powers from the vilification of the resistors as Jewish sub humans and bandits (Juden, Untermenschen und Banditen), escalating into the use of flamethrowers and anti-aircraft guns in an effort to rapidly crush the resistance. Following the immediate exuberance brought out by the destruction of the ghetto, in the longer term the experience had a sobering affect upon the SS leadership. The uprising proved too much for Hitler and the SS leadership; it was not to be repeated. The SS translated the Stroop experience into new lessons of how to handle the Jews, the results of which were all too clear from the ill-fated Bialystok resistance of 16-20 August 1943. This was proof that the Germans had changed their tactical thinking, 'Everywhere the Germans employed lies, surprise and

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<sup>10</sup> NA, IMT 1919-PS, the prosecutors at Nuremberg attached it with the infamous Posen Speech.

stealth to liquidate the ghettos. Sudden encirclements at night, or at dawn, prevented organized combat groups from mobilizing and coordinating their units.’<sup>11</sup>

The Warsaw Ghetto report by the SS commander, Jürgen Stroop, detailed the daily actions and the pacification process. It was an object lesson in SS methods of suppression. The report was illustrative of the prevailing security thinking in 1943, and the SS skills in the coordination of a mixed force of police and Wehrmacht troops. This security expertise included the utilisation the fire brigade and the Technische Nothilfe to shut down the ghetto’s energy supplies and normal facilities such as running water. These same units were also able to block off the sewers to prevent the free movement of resistors underground. The presence of the fire brigade also allowed the use of heavy weapons directed toward building destruction preventing the spread of fires or serious structural damage beyond the ghetto. The list of German casualties, largely young men, further confirmed the policy of youth discussed in the previous chapter. Yet, effective as this was, the concentration of firepower and military authority was a relatively small operation in terms of the actions taken against the partisans in the east. Stroop was subsequently promoted to the new position of HSSPF Greece, where due to his incompetence in SS-Wehrmacht diplomacy through his generally heavy-handed arrogance, he was eventually sacked. In later years, he became the convenient post-war culprit for SS leaders who had done a lot worse and in greater numbers.

### The Nazi doctrine of security

In a file memo dated the 28<sup>th</sup> June 1943 Himmler listed the agreements made with Hitler at a meeting in the Obersalzberg on the 19 June 1943. The memo was entitled the Bandenkampf und Sicherheitslage (Bandit fight and the Security situation).<sup>12</sup> The memo covered the central tenets of Bandenbekämpfung including the genocide of the Jews and the political control of the occupied territories. As usual there was some reflection on what had happened in the previous years. The operational failures of the previous

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<sup>11</sup> Dawidowicz, 1975, pp394-398.

<sup>12</sup> NS19/1433, “Bandenkampf- und Sicherheitslage”. Vortrag des Reichsführers-SS bei Hitler auf dem Obersalzberg am 19<sup>th</sup> June 1943; NA, T175, roll 81 and roll 70, Reichsführer-SS, RF/Bn. 39/147/43g, Field command place, 28. 6. 1943, Meeting held with the Führer on 19-6-1943 at the Obersalzberg, "Bandit fight and Security Situation", frames 2601601/2. Also on T175 Roll 70, frames 2586868/9. Interestingly the document was pulled from the files for use in the IMT trials on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1947 under the heading Bandenbekämpfung and classified as NO-331. It was returned on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 1947. There is no record of the document ever having been used in the court proceedings.

winters of 1941-42 and 1942-43 were not attributed to Himmler but they were not to be repeated. Hitler reconfirmed Himmler's responsibility for Bandenbekämpfung:

The bandit fight is the business of the Reichsführer-SS, the SS and police. He confirmed that no reproach is held against the SS and police because of the growing bandit danger after the loss of forces to the front.<sup>13</sup>

Hitler had accepted that German policy had resulted in failure but instead of looking for a new direction, he again preferred to rely on Himmler. The impact of Stroop's action in the clearing of the Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto was still a subject of concern. Hitler had placed the genocide of the Jew as a priority and was concerned with the efficiency of the process, as point five of the memo confirms:

[T]he Führer declared, after my report, that the evacuation of the Jews, despite the unrest that would thereby still arise in the next 3 to 4 months, was to be radically carried out and had to be seen through.<sup>14</sup>

In point six Himmler's authority was extended over the general-government of Poland, 'The Führer clearly stated that the anti-bandit warfare and the questions of security were solely the matter and authority of the Reichsführer-SS, even in the General-Government.' The continuing manpower problem and the need to deploy more units in the campaign were raised. Hitler promised to agree to the transfer of the two police regiments of "Franz" and "Griese" from Finland and from Marseille if the situation warranted it. The question of collaboration also arose and on this occasion Himmler used the term Galician to overcome the possibility and fear of being misinterpreted as requesting the permission to employ Poles:

The Führer declined all suggestions to raise Polish formations, following the Katyn propaganda, as some on the German side have suggested. The formation of Galician units from the area of Galician White Ruthenia is acceptable as this had been part of Austria over the last 150 years.<sup>15</sup>

The existence of this memo firmly links Bandenbekämpfung with the genocide of the Jews. It also shows how far the broad security policy approach was internalised, in this sense Himmler perfectly imposed Hitler's wishes.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, NS19/1433.

<sup>14</sup> This section has taken the section translated in Kershaw, 2000, p 589.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, NS19/1433.

## II. The Strategic Direction of Bandenbekämpfung

While the core mission remained the eradication of Jews and partisans, other strategic missions began to make greater prominence in 1943. One concerned the control over the occupied populations, and, the other to round-up and deport labour on behalf of German industry. The total war footing had increased the capacity of industry and, by proportion, the demand for labour. The continual source of eastern manpower for the SS and Wehrmacht placed a counter pressure on these labour social policies. The ongoing routine protection for the communications and the maintenance of military efficiency, regular supply, began to stretch SS-police manpower just as the Soviet partisan strategy turned against the German transportation system.

### Self-imposed pressure: the search for labour

Since 1940, Himmler had initiated projects that planned the use of significant resources in the formation of an eastern empire, based upon a slave economy.<sup>16</sup> Himmler, in his responsibility for German resettlement policy (Siedlungspolitik), had gained from the experience of the on-going mass movement of peoples since 1938. By 1942, this experience was employed in the racial re-engineering of the whole of the occupied east.<sup>17</sup> However, Nazi war aims (Kriegszielpolitik) had become mixed into a cocktail of civilian and military interests. There were competing agencies for the 'place in the east', the German Work Front, the Wehrmacht, the State Labour Service, the Todt (Speer) construction organisation and Göring's multitude of offices. There were serious manpower shortfalls, even after the mass conscription programmes and the influx of large numbers of foreign labourers. The decision to employ large numbers of foreign labour lay in a Speer-Sauckel directive of March 1942. On the 12<sup>th</sup> January 1943, a central conference took place in Berlin of SS bureaucrats on the availability of labour in all territories.<sup>18</sup> Later in July 1943, Field Marshal Keitel issued a Führer order that directed the employment of captured partisans for labour:

On 7 July the Fuhrer ordered that in order to extend the programme of iron and steel production, the production of coal must be increased, and to

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<sup>16</sup> Wasser, 1993. The chapter entitled *Die Kontinuität im Deutschen Drang nach Osten*, pp11-19 covers this subject quite adequately. The 'General Plan Ost' (General Plan East) which emerged from Himmler's offices was the first blue print for SS hegemony in the east.

<sup>17</sup> Rolf-Dieter Müller, *Hitlers Ostkrieg und die deutsche Siedlungspolitik. Die Zusammenarbeit von Wehrmacht, Wirtschaft und SS*, (Frankfurt a. M, 1991).

<sup>18</sup> NA, IMT, 705-PS, Minutes of the conference 12<sup>th</sup> January 1943.



achieve this the work force must be augmented by prisoners of war... Prisoners who are men aged 16-55 and who were captured during the struggle against gangs in areas of fighting, in the army's rear, in eastern commissariats in governor-generalships and in the Balkans are considered prisoners of war. This also applies to men in newly conquered regions of the East. They are to be sent to prisoner of war camps and from there to work in Germany...<sup>19</sup>

There appeared to be contradictions everywhere few of which could be resolved. In a letter from the Reichskommissariat Ostland, to Himmler there was this statement, 'The fight against bands also is taking on forms which are highly questionable if pacification and exploitation of the several territories are the aims of our policy. Thus, in the report of the 5<sup>th</sup> June 1943, regarding Operation Cottbus, the 5,000 dead partisan suspects, with a few exceptions, would have been suitable for forced labour, became another issue of complaint by representatives of the civilian administration.'<sup>20</sup> Thus the contradictions between matching the labour shortages in the Reich with the cost to the occupation administration was gradually becoming routine within reports:

The recruitment of labour for the Reich, however necessary, had disastrous effects. The recruitment measures in the last months and weeks were absolute manhunts, which have an irreparable political and economic effect. From White Ruthenia, approx. 50,000 people have been obtained. Considering the 2.4 million total population these figures are impossible... Due to the sweeping drives (Grossaktionen) of the SS and police in November 1942, about 115000 hectare farmland is not used, as the population is not there and the villages have been razed [sic].<sup>21</sup>

A report produced in August 1944, referred to the retreat from the district of Kasatin between 8<sup>th</sup> November and 28<sup>th</sup> December 1943:

The withdrawal was affected according to plan and without friction, with all implements, after all camps had been evacuated previously; the cattle – above all the valuables breeds (oxen and horse stables) led back. German tractors and farm machines transported away and all businesses had been crippled...<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> IWM, IMT, 744-PS, Manpower for Coalmining, 7 July 1943, issued on the 8 July. 7 July 1943 meeting at Hitler's HQ, use of labour in mining industry led to a directive No 02358/43 of July 8, 1943 signed by Himmler.

<sup>20</sup> NA, IMT R-135, Diary no. 3628/43, Letter from Reichs Commissar for the Eastland, to Personnel Staff RFSS, 18 June 1943, unknown author.

<sup>21</sup> IWM, IMT, 3000-PS, Report on experiences in political and economic problems in the East, particularly White Ruthenia, 28 June 1943.

<sup>22</sup> NA, IMT, 1702-PS, Evacuation report of District Commissariat of Kasatin, 1<sup>st</sup> August 1944, a radio

Following a message of the 25<sup>th</sup> December 1943, from an unnamed general of the war economy department of the army, a decision was made, 'The able-bodied male population between 15 and 65 years of age and the cattle are to be shipped back from the district...' <sup>23</sup> There are several stories of how absurd this roundup of labour could become. Since 1940, the police had rounded up the audiences of Warsaw cinemas and sent them to forced labour in Germany. On most occasions when the security forces were on an operation to round up labour they had members of Sauckel's organisation in close attendance. In most cases:

The village was suddenly surrounded and without warning the police gathered the inhabitants into the village square. In the presence of the local mayor those not essential for the local farms and industry were immediately taken off to collection points for transfer to Germany. <sup>24</sup>

Maintaining military efficiency: 'The War of the Rails' <sup>25</sup>

The main, rear area, supply collection and distribution centres joined a double-track trunk railway line on an east-west axis. These centres were located in Königsberg, Bialystok, Brest-Litovsk, Kovel and Lemberg. The reception centres for the trains going east were Pleskau, Smolensk, Bryansk (Orel), Gomel, Kharkov, Kiev, and Dnjepropetrovsk. Intersecting and bisecting these trunk lines were single-track standard gauge and narrow gauge railways, which completed the network. <sup>26</sup> From March 1943, the partisans undertook 404 attacks on the railways and blew up the Desna bridges, cutting the line between Gomel and Bryansk. The number of attacks increased monthly and peaked in July with 1,114 incidents. Following the Battle of Kursk, the Soviet plan in the late summer of 1943, was to destroy important and key points along the German rail system. The plan came in two operational phases; phase one (August 1943) led to

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message.

<sup>23</sup> NA, IMT, 1702-PS, *ibid*.

<sup>24</sup> BZ-USMT, 26<sup>th</sup> October 1945.

<sup>25</sup> J.J. Baritz, *War of the Rails*, Purnell's History of the Second World War, vol. 7, (1973), pp2857-2867.

<sup>26</sup> Klaus Hildebrand, *Die Deutsche Reichsbahn in der nationalsozialistischen Diktatur 1933-1945*, in Lothar Gall and Manfred Pohl (Hrsg), *Die Eisenbahn in Deutschland von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, (München, 1999), pp165-249, see also, Hans Pottgiesser, *Die Deutsche Reichsbahn im Ostfeldzug 1939-1944*, (Neckargemünd, 1975), Andreas Knipping und Reinhard Schulz, *Reichsbahn hinter der Ostfront 1941-1944*, Alfred B.Gottwaldt, *Heeresfeldbahnen: Bau und Einsatz der militärischen Schmalspurbahnen in zwei Weltkriegen*, (Stuttgart, 1998), Michael Reimer, *Lokomotiven für die Ostfront: Menschen und Maschiene im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, (München, 1999), and Alfred Gottwaldt, "Fahren für Deutschlands Sieg!": Julius Dorpmüller und die Deutsche Reichsbahn Eine biographische Skizze, in Museum für Verkehr und Technik, *Ich Diente nur Der Technik, Sieben Karrieren zwischen 1940 und 1950*, (Berlin, 1995).

21,300 rail attacks, mostly in Byelorussia, by 167 partisan brigades of 95,615 men.<sup>27</sup> The second phase (1<sup>st</sup> September to 1<sup>st</sup> November 1943) deployed 193 partisan brigades totalling 120,000 men. This phase called for the destruction of 272,000 miles of railway. The results were mixed, some say they succeeded and others that it was a failure. The results have been the cause of some controversy. There were 20,505 rails destroyed in the rear area of Army Group Centre. The fact that disorganisation in the German rear appears not have been as great as expected suggests the plan was less successful.<sup>28</sup> The scale of railway attacks can be measured in some detail for the month of September 1943, along the principle lines:

**Table 23: Battle of the Rails (1943)<sup>29</sup>**

Bialystok to Luga (North-South)	65 attacks
Wilna to Gomel (west-east)	282 attacks
Brest-Litovsk (North-South)	166 attacks
Brest-Litovsk to Gomel (east-west)	255 attacks
Brest-Litovsk to Kassalin	285 attacks
Lublin to Kiev	106 attacks

Bach-Zelewski more than once referred to the railway attacks during the post war interrogations at Nuremburg. In one case in 1943, he said a military supply train travelling from Bialystok to Minsk, under strong security. The train was attacked along the Slonim–Minsk section of the line, and the German security unit, an infantry battalion, suffered 2–3 dead and 8 wounded. The troops marched into the nearest village, killing all the men and deporting the women and children, and plundering cattle before setting fire to the village.<sup>30</sup> In his war diary Bach-Zelewski was less gracious towards an attack he personally experienced on a train trip in Croatia:

Swine's! The train in front has driven over a torpedo [German term for a mine], and the train behind mined and has been bombarded. We drove clear of the skirmishes.<sup>31</sup>

### III. Leadership Changes: Dismantling the Triumvirate

The fundamentals of command in conventional war may require modification, inversion, in a counterinsurgency environment where purely

<sup>27</sup> Herman Teske, FMS, D369, 'Railroad Transportation, Operation Zitadelle 1943', (1948).

<sup>28</sup> Baritz, *ibid*, pp2857-2867.

<sup>29</sup> NA T78, roll 556, frame 789205 to end OKW records, map of railway attacks, September 1943.

<sup>30</sup> BZ-USMT, 20<sup>th</sup> January 1946.

<sup>31</sup> TVDB, 6<sup>th</sup> December 1943.

military factors are less important than psychological and political ones<sup>32</sup>

The summer of 1943 saw the culmination of a series of long festering issues, the appearance of new problems and a crisis in the leadership of the SS. The last element in the 'Himmler-Daluege-Heydrich' triumvirate was finally dissolved in the summer of 1943. Kurt Daluege was relieved from his command, and Himmler was promoted to Minister of the Interior. Hitler's final loss of faith in Reichsminister of the Interior Wilhelm Frick led him to promote Heinrich Himmler to the post. In institutional terms this spelled the final stage in the process of centralisation and amalgamation of the police, the SS and the judiciary. Himmler became totally responsible for the lives of criminals, foreign workers, prisoners, 'internal enemies of the state' (anti-Nazi factions), Jews, and partisans.

Just as the death of Heydrich was a blow to the heart of the regime, the loss of Kurt Daluege due to the regressive effects of 'congenital syphilis', was a blow to the SS-Police establishment.<sup>33</sup> Unlike the prolonged period Himmler took to find Heydrich's successor, eventually choosing Dr. Ernst Kaltenbrunner; Daluege was immediately retired and replaced by Alfred Wünnenberg, a career policeman. Daluege, as a consequence, became a non-person within the regime, but vital to records division of the National Socialism museum in Munich. Hitler refused to have anything more to do with Daluege, who was consigned to one asylum after another. Bach-Zelewski also broke off his relationship, and, in 1943, Himmler warned Daluege not to get involved in intrigues.<sup>34</sup> The only confirmation of contact between Daluege and a member of the Reich government was through Albert Speer, who was convalescing in the same asylum.<sup>35</sup> Certainly Himmler was so embarrassed about the situation that he could not bring himself to tell his senior officers at the meeting in Posen:

Our old friend Daluege has such severe heart trouble that he has to undergo courses of treatment and now has to retire from active service for one-and-a-half to two years... As I have said, we may hope that Daluege will have

<sup>32</sup> Martin Van Creveld, *Command in War*, (Harvard, 1985), p262.

<sup>33</sup> NA, RG 319 IRR Case Files: US Army Intelligence papers, list number 544, file NND931114, declassification XE002394, subject K. Daluege. This file was requested and declassified on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1999. The interrogating officer described his illness as congenital syphilis, stating this had been contracted in 1936. The details help to explain Daluege's behaviour, his enforced retirement and his absence from the SS files after he had left office.

<sup>34</sup> NA, SS personnel file, Kurt Daluege, Himmler did not clarify as to what these issues were.

<sup>35</sup> Albert Speer, *The Slave State*, (London, 1981), p9.

recovered in about two years and can then return to the front and get into harness.<sup>36</sup>

The end of the triumvirate brought the middle management, the powerhouse of the SS organisation, into significant positions of authority. These men were to prove just as ruthless and uncompromising as their predecessors.

#### The new Chef der Bandenkampfverbände

The position of chief of the anti-partisan units was a central office [senior SS office]. Primarily it was a central report office, which worked, in close co-operation with the OKW and the OKH. As a central report officer I was responsible for all partisan reports from the whole of Europe, which arrived at this office, and I had to work on the great, large, band-position maps which I myself had to draw up and which during the daily situation discussions with the Führer had to be presented to him by Himmler...<sup>37</sup>

Bach-Zelewski's promotion to Chef der Bandenkampfverbände by Himmler confirmed the opinion that he only trusted a few men, those who had already proven themselves reliable. When Bach-Zelewski was made Bevollmächtigter des Reichsführers SS für Bandenbekämpfung in October 1942, his status had clearly changed.<sup>38</sup> Bach-Zelewski's only comment regarding the changes was made in his diary. He believed his new position was a demotion to the equivalent of a brigade commander. He added that this had been because of his claims against Curt von Gottberg.<sup>39</sup> However, there is no evidence on either SS officers' files that suggest there was a problem between them. Bach-Zelewski's promotion to Chef der Bandenkampfverbände was made verbally by Himmler on the 19<sup>th</sup> June 1943, at the KSRFSS, in the presence of Krüger (HSSPF General-government), Kaltenbrunner, and Prützmann.<sup>40</sup> Officially, Bach-Zelewski worked directly under Himmler's orders, but he was also granted control over large numbers of forces for specific tasks. The following model illustrates the size and status of the office in the context of the wider SS structure.

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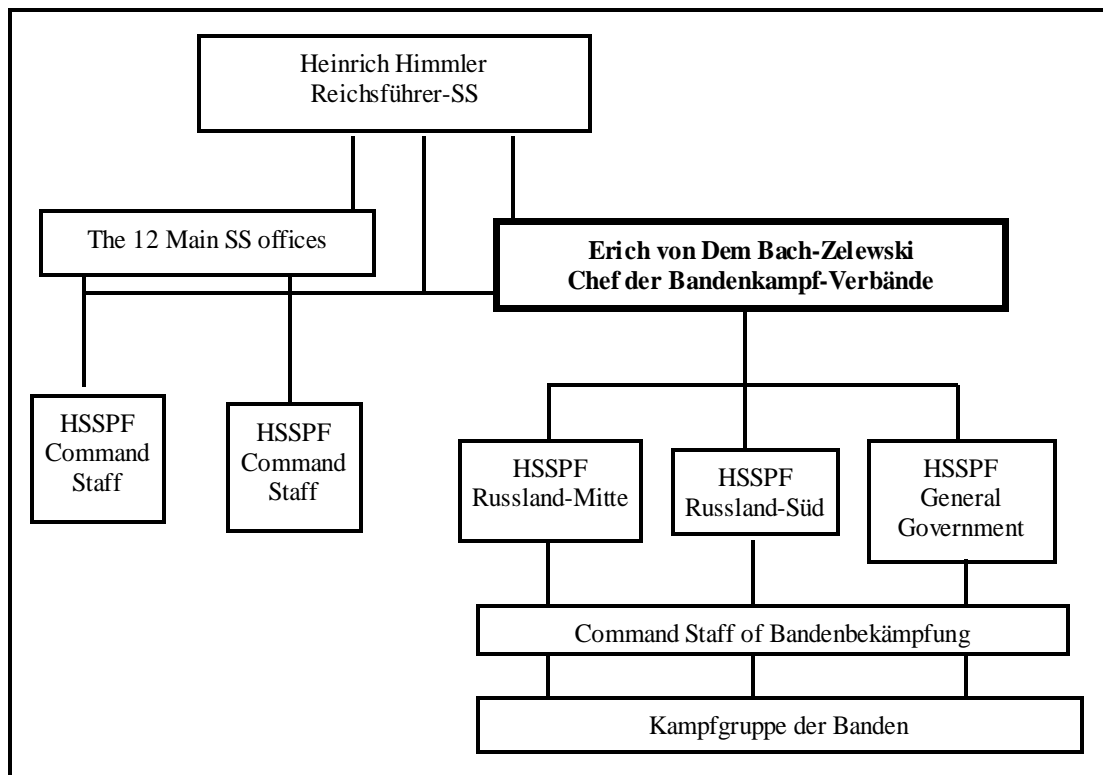
<sup>36</sup> NA, IMT 1919-PS, *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> BZ-USMT, 24<sup>th</sup> October 1945.

<sup>38</sup> TVDB, p51.

<sup>39</sup> TVDB, p65.

<sup>40</sup> TVDB, p77.

**Diagram 9: The Chef der Bandenkampfverbände (June 1943)<sup>41</sup>**

Bach-Zelewski often described himself as the foremost authority on anti-bandit warfare during the war crimes process.<sup>42</sup> While under interrogation, he alleged that this office of the Chef der Bandenkampfverbände included his appointment to the central offices of the SS organisation. The published report issued alongside Bach-Zelewski's promotion, mentioned in the fourth point, that the position Chef der Bandenkampfverbände was a high command, at the level of the RFSS himself.<sup>43</sup> It is not totally clear what this meant. Whether it was another SS central office is difficult to confirm. In December 1943, Himmler listed his 12 main departments of the SS in a speech to the commanders of the Kriegsmarine (German Navy). He neither referred to

<sup>41</sup> This diagram shows the establishment of the three HSSPF in the east (the exclusion of Russland-Nord was not explained), with the Bandenbekämpfung command staff and the formation of the kampfguppe. Each of the other HSSPF's were to also form command staffs, but not a kampfguppe unless their territory was declared a Bandenkampfgebiet (a territory under anti bandit warfare).

<sup>42</sup> BZ-USMT, 22 August 1945, Bach-Zelewski 'considers himself the world's foremost authority on anti-partisan warfare'.

<sup>43</sup> BA BL, NS19/1706, SS-Befehl vom 21.6.1943 zur Bandenbekämpfung, insbes. Zuständigkeit des Reichsführers-SS und Umwandlung der Dienststelle des "Bevollmächtigten für die Bandenbekämpfung" in "Der Reichsführer-SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei, Der Chef der Bandenkampfverbände" sowie Ernennung von SS-Obergruppenführer von dem Bach zum Chef der Bandenkampfverbände and NA, T175, roll, 21<sup>st</sup> June 1943, Der RFSS, TGB.Nr. 198/43 g.Kdos, the order was cleared three days after the Hitler-Himmler meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> June.

the Chef der Bandenkampfverbände or its activities.<sup>44</sup> Bach-Zelewski's authority was officially extended across all SS territorial zones for reporting purposes, but he confined his movements to the eastern front, with two visits to the Balkans. He was able to operate freely across sectors and fronts; his main function was the collection and identification of armed resistance.<sup>45</sup> His offices kept statistics of all activity across Europe; lists including suspects were kept in the closest detail.<sup>46</sup> To confuse the situation further he also called himself the Chief of Sondervverbände, a:

Central Reporting Agency, where all areas reported to the office. An area was declared a Sonderkampfgebiet (Special Battle Area). Then the chief moved into the area, and only gave advice. He had no executive powers. All decisions had to pass through Himmler. Mixed troops made it easier for the decision to pass control to the Chef der Bandenkampfverbände.<sup>47</sup>

#### The construction of Bach-Zelewski's authority

As the fighting itself went I was in charge of operations only in the east, but since I was responsible for the drawing up of a new band fighting regulation of course I found out on the spot in the southeast about the band fighting and I myself took part actively with the Wehrmacht in a partisan operation in Croatia.<sup>48</sup>

Within the announcement of Bach-Zelewski's promotion Himmler discussed the construction of the new authority. In the first point, he likened the actions of the 'partisans' to robbers and bandits, directed by the Red Army in a Bolshevik plot to undermine the German rear-areas.<sup>49</sup> In the following point, he referred to the importance of maintaining law and order in the security zones, and, ensuring the continuation of exploitation on behalf of the German war effort. He confirmed that the position of Chef der Bandenkampfverbände carried out the planning and the leadership of operations in the name of the RFSS.<sup>50</sup> To these ends, he made a telling personal comment on the requirements of the men involved in this work, 'Cowards amongst the

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<sup>44</sup> NA, T175, roll 91, Wortlaut der Rede des Reichsführer-SS...auf der Tagung für Befehlshaber der Kriegsmarine in Weimar, 16<sup>th</sup> December 1943.

<sup>45</sup> BZ-IMT, 24 October 1945.

<sup>46</sup> USMT, Hostage case 7, p8943.

<sup>47</sup> NA-IMT, 25<sup>th</sup> October 1945. This attempt to reduce his power of authority under US Army interrogation is contradicted by the references to making operational decisions in his war diary.

<sup>48</sup> USMT, Hostage case 7, courtroom evidence given by Bach-Zelewski, page 8917.

<sup>49</sup> BA BL, NS19/1706, SS-Befehl vom 21.6.1943 and T175, roll, 21<sup>st</sup> June 1943, Der RFSS, TGB.Nr. 198/43 g.Kdos,

<sup>50</sup> NA, T175, roll 112, general SS order 198/43 g.kdos, 21<sup>st</sup> June 1943.

German ranks, unable to complete this work, should be shot like the Bandits they are.’ The bureaucracy behind Bach-Zelewski’s promotion was highly unusual even by the standards of the Nazis. His promotion was officially announced to the leading characters of the regime, the circulation list has survived. This was an exercise of Himmler’s corporate politicking and included the senior members of the regime - Hitler, Göring, Bormann, Speer, Rosenberg, Frank and Sauckel. It also included the functional chiefs of government, military and SS departments, listed in the following table:

**Table 24: Senior members of the regime advised of Bach-Zelewski’s promotion<sup>51</sup>**

Government Official	Responsibility	SS	Responsibility	OKW	Responsibility
Lammers	Reichschancellery	Berger	SS Main Office	Keitel	Chief OKW
Ganzenmüller	Railways	Prützmann	HSSPF	Zeitzler	Chief of the General Staff
Dorpmüller	Railways	Jeckeln	HSSPF	Jodl	
Schwarz	Party Treasury	Korsemann	HSSPF	Warlimont	
Ohnesorge	Post-Telegraphs	Baumert		Canaris	Abwehr
		Rode	KSRFSS	Fromm	Reserve Army
				Schmundt	Hitler’s Adjutant

On the same day of his promotion Bach-Zelewski was given the official code-name ‘Arminius’. It is difficult to ascertain whether this was a tongue in cheek comment, or whether it represented the sentiment of the organisation.<sup>52</sup> Some days later he was given a new Junkers 52 transport aeroplane, with letters from Göring confirming the transfer.<sup>53</sup> In the acquisition of aircraft Himmler was reliant upon the good grace of Herman Göring; on the 13<sup>th</sup> August 1942, a discussion took place between them. Himmler made a file memo of the meeting. Himmler had agreed that all SS-Police aircraft would come under Luftwaffe control, probably in line with the rationalisation process.<sup>54</sup> The gift of the aircraft was highly prized, and confirms the ongoing

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, the distribution list was attached to the order. The letters of congratulation from Speer and others are contained in Bach-Zelewski’s personnel file.

<sup>52</sup> Arminius was the young Germanic tribesman who led an army to victory over the Roman Army commanded by Varus at the Battle of the Teutoburger Wald in the 9AD.

<sup>53</sup> NA, Bach-Zelewski, SS personnel file.

<sup>54</sup> NA, T175, roll 65, 13<sup>th</sup> August 1943. The Luftwaffe assigned Colonel Meister while Himmler deputised Lieutenant Colonel Kuring to conclude matters on his behalf. Kuring was responsible for all SS-Police pilots including the security services. Göring then offered Himmler aviation support for any new mission requirements. Himmler was able to get a new Fieseler Storch for the new HSSPF in the Caucasus. Himmler had requested a Junkers 52 for flying during the poor weather in southern Russia on behalf of SS-Gruppenführer Korsemann (see chapter seven). Göring said it would not be possible because there was a shortage of planes and not even senior members of the army had their own aeroplane. Korsemann could have access to a plane as and when he needed it but not as a designated aircraft and crew.



relationship between Bach-Zelewski, Göring and Himmler. To recap, their joint activities stretched from Röhm Putsch (1934), through to the order to clear Białowieża and the implementation of genocide (1941).

#### **IV. The Office of the Bandenkampfverbände: The SS-Police General Staff**

The structures for Bandenbekämpfung were very much the product of Himmler's administrative style and his interest in ensuring a high level of functionality. The SS-Police general staff structure set up in the wake of the leadership changes was neither a new phenomenon for the Police or the SS. Leadership offices were a large part of the SS structural dynamic. They also tended to follow one of two methods: a top down model or a more unconventional matrix structure of overlapping tasks and responsibilities. In the case of the Bandenkampfverbände the planned organisational structure combined the traditional hierarchical authority overlaid with security experts, forming a matrix style organisation.<sup>55</sup> This provided for small numbers of staff officers who were responsible for administration who could also perform command tasks in the field. The cultural ethos of this office might be likened to 'action this day'. This system reflected the dynamic staff of the Waffen-SS. Both sets of staff projected the potential for seniority progress, exploiting success and learning from failure. These characteristics cannot be solely attributable to the conditions of war. These methods processes were highly advanced in concept and must have been an expression of Himmler's management thinking.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> August 1940, Himmler had formed the SS-Führungshauptamt, which was the chief of staff function within the Waffen-SS. It was responsible for operations and training. SS-Brigadeführer Hans Jüttner took command of the office in June 1943, but had carried on the role in the name of Himmler since 1940.<sup>56</sup> The leading figures of the Waffen-SS, Felix Steiner and Paul Hausser, both of whom wrote glowing memoirs of their part in the history of the Waffen-SS after the war, tended to ignore Hans Jüttner. In 1940, Jüttner's personal appraisal was typical for an officer on the fast track to promotion, he was described as a very correct and energetic character:

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<sup>55</sup> Alan Bullock and Oliver Stallybrass, *The Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*, (London, 1977), p447, '[T]he concept of the matrix organisation, ... sets up transient project teams, with members drawn from various functional groups, thus mapping multi-disciplinary teams across the traditional organisation chart...'

<sup>56</sup> Stein, op cit, pp105-104. Stein overlooks an important issue. Himmler took on the title of a position until he was happy with the incumbent who then was given formal responsibility. It was a trait that spoke of his willingness to be seen to accept responsibility for his actions and those of subordinates.

Jüttner was employed in tasks of responsibility with considerable freedom of action. He is highly motivated in fulfilling his duty. He is reliable and active worker. He is also reliable in command. Jüttner is trusted and respected by all his comrades.<sup>57</sup>

Jüttner's role in Bandenbekämpfung was crucial. He supplied arms and especially armoured cars and other specialist equipment to the SS-Police forces.

### The Structure and Operations

The structure of the office of the Chef der Bandenkampfverbände was a radical departure from SS security organisation up to that time. The emphasis was on command and control, based upon the centralisation of intelligence and the mobility of the commander. In terms of organisation, the office worked from within the confines of the KSRFSS.<sup>58</sup> The commander (Bach-Zelewski) was supported by two staff functions, one working as the command staff and the other as the quartermaster staff; copying the army's system of command structure. This system was to be replicated down to the command function within each HSSPF offices.<sup>59</sup> At the same time three HSSPFs (central Russia, Poland and southern Russia) were expected to construct a Kampfgruppe (battle-group) to aggressively combat the partisans (see chapter eight). The construction of the command staff was as follows:

**Table 25: Bandenkampfverbände Command Detachment**

SERVICE	IA	IC	IN	LIAISON OFFICER
Senior Officers	1 General Staff officer	3 General Staff Officers	1 Signals Officer	Administrative Officer
Assistants	5 Assistant Officers	3 Assistant Officers	1 radio specialist	
Responsibilities:	Operations	Intelligence	Signals	Liaison with the army

In point six, Himmler stated that, 'The RFSS would declare a territory that had become Bandenkampfgebiet (an anti-partisan area).'<sup>60</sup> This was a crucial decision that declared an area 'partisan infested', but it also placed that area under the nominal command of the RFSS. This question of authority became a major problem in practise, although Bach-Zelewski suggested otherwise at Nuremberg:

With regard to the combating of the bands, the RFSS was not alone

<sup>57</sup> NA, SS personnel file, Hans Jüttner, performance appraisal November 1940.

<sup>58</sup> NA, T175, roll 222, 21<sup>st</sup> June 1943, Der RFSS, TGB.Nr.198/43 g.Kdos.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 7<sup>th</sup> September 1943, Der RFSS, Ia. Tgb. Nr. 336/43 g.Kdos: The letter insists that each HSSPF formed a staff unit, from their existing resources, committed to the Bandenkampf. The office would report to Himmler but would not be allowed separate resources in its formation.

<sup>60</sup> NA, T175, roll 222, 21<sup>st</sup> June 1943, Der RFSS, TGB.Nr. 198/43 g.Kdos

responsible, but according to a general order of the OKW the responsibility was varied in the individual districts. In the operational area of the east that is, in that area of the rear army areas, the responsibility for the combating of the bands was that of the OKH. For all areas in the east with civilian administration, that is in the Reichskommissariaten (sic), Heinrich Himmler was responsible; and for the southeast the OKW was responsible, the Wehrmacht Operational Staff. These three offices had to work closely together. Daily reports from all of these three various areas, also the monthly reports, were exchanged mutually with a certain date, so that I received all the reports from the OKH and the OKW and these two received all my reports. All reports, to the highest commander of all the parts of the Wehrmacht, that is to Hitler, were made in the situation conferences by Himmler.<sup>61</sup>

The announcement of a Bandenkampfgebiet caused considerable problems between the SS and the Wehrmacht as responsibility irrespective of territorial mandate was passed to the SS.<sup>62</sup> Bach-Zelewski made a revealing entry on the 20<sup>th</sup> April 1944, in regards to operations in southern Europe:

The Army - Bandenkampfverbände relationship in the Adriatic coast and Italy area had been declared a Bandenkampfgebiet by 'Wölffchen' [Karl Wolff, senior SS commander in Italy]. Discussions followed with the OKW and the last chance of clarification was lost. Only areas where the RFSS had declared a Bandenkampfgebiet actually happened. There were estranged relations when HSSPF were subordinated to the army...[sic]<sup>63</sup>

One of Bach-Zelewski's first tasks as Bevollmächtigter des Reichsführers SS für Bandenbekämpfung had been to attend conferences with Schenckendorff, as on the 27<sup>th</sup> October 1942, in attempt to prevent problems over authority. They drew up a broad agreement over the respective competences between the SS and the army. On the following day he visited the Chief of Staff of Army Group Centre, Major General Wöhler and they signed a contract on the respective spheres of operations. Included in this agreement was the employment of the 13<sup>th</sup> SS-Police Regiment in security measures; and, their assignment included the construction of a secondary defence line.<sup>64</sup>

The routine of the command section included the location and assessment of the partisan threat. Planning work included drafting tactical situation maps and the

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<sup>61</sup> USMT, Hostage Case 7, p 8917.

<sup>62</sup> The FMS reports that refer to partisan warfare virtually concur on the problems of authority between the SS and Wehrmacht.

<sup>63</sup> TVDB, 20<sup>th</sup> April 1944.

<sup>64</sup> TVDB, p65. Bach-Zelewski's diary also mentioned the inclusion of 'Bandenbekämpfung and the security of Trace' (sic). It is not altogether clear what was meant by the security of Trace.

preparation of combat instructions and guidelines. This section also handled the decisions for the clearing of territories. The intelligence tasks also included the formulation of a political analysis in the identification of the bandit gangs. The section covered the in-depth analysis of the bandit gangs including their arms, training and their manpower. Additionally, these three areas were in the process of forming three military staffs for the purpose of co-ordinating police forces up to an infantry division level per area but this had not been finalised.<sup>65</sup> Bach-Zelewski actually provided some information on how the system worked:

All reports even from the security police ended up in his office. This was the Reich information centre...The information service was present in all regions and departments. The Ic was responsible for the collection of this information. The General Quartermaster was the bureau for the transfer of all information. He received information from the HSSPF and kept a map. Then the picture would be presented to Hitler daily. Heightened security meant even the smallest units formed their own information point.<sup>66</sup>

Intelligence was universally recognised as central to defeating the partisan. The 1942 *Bandenbekämpfung* manual stated that intelligence gathering (*nachrichtendienstliche Erfassung*) was essential for all security operations. It recommended the use of both strong arm and compassionate methods to gain information from captured partisans. Examples from reports found among Himmler's papers dated from July 1944, highlight the dispersal of reporting from across Europe. The papers came from the Ia (operations section) of the *Chef der Bandenkampfverbände* described as daily 'activity reports'. A sense of the kind of reporting is taken from the following examples:

1st July 1944: in the Weißruthenien – Borissoff area, Operation Kormoran had resulted in 7,700 enemy dead, 5,300 prisoners, 9,000 bunkers destroyed, and 2,500 hand and machine guns, 400 horses and 1 one gun captured.<sup>67</sup> In Italy an action in Susa-Tal for labour in Germany collected 476 men. On the same day the results of SS-Police Operation 'Cologne' (11-28th June 1944) two bandit groups of about 1000 men in Domodossola area., the summary listed 111 enemy dead, 71 prisoners, 106 arrests, from 20 battle actions with 458 houses destroyed. German losses included 5 dead and 19 wounded. Thirty Junkers 87 dive-bombers bombed a bandit camp in the Crissolo area.

<sup>65</sup> NA, T175, roll 222, 29 October 1943, Feld Kommandostelle RFSS.

<sup>66</sup> BZ-IMT, 24 October 1945.

<sup>67</sup> NA, T175, roll 222, op cit Abt Ic, Tagb. Nr. 1272/44 geh, *Bandenlagebericht*, 1<sup>st</sup> July 1944.

6th July 1944: in Croatia, Operation Dünkirchen, saw 319 partisans killed for 81 German dead and 135 wounded. There were an estimated 10,000 bandits in the Kalnik Mountain range. Operation Kornblume II had seen 173 enemy dead, 179 captured and 174 suspects arrested. German losses were 4 dead (1 Wehrmacht, 3 foreigners) and 31 wounded (2 Wehrmacht and 29 foreigners); the partisans had attacked at least 6 railway lines.

7th July 1944: a report was entered from France that operations since 6th June 1944 by the SD, the Waffen-SS and Orpo have accounted for 6,000 terrorists dead and 4,000 prisoners.

8th July 1944: there was a report referring to the 27<sup>th</sup> Bulgarian Division stationed in Serbia which was in a protracted fight against the 22<sup>nd</sup> Red Bandit Division.<sup>68</sup>

The quartermaster detachment was intended to conduct services for the offices of the Chef der Bandenkampfverbände, in the same way as their counter-parts of the army. Their formation was typical of the German army quartermaster system and is outlined in the following table:

**Table 26: Bandenkampfverbände Quartermaster Detachment**

SERVICE	QUARTERMASTER	IVA	IVB/IVC	V	IIA/B
Senior Officers	2 General Staff Officers	Director of supply	Director of Medicine	Director of Transport	Military civil servants
Assistants	2 Assistant officers	1 Assistant officer	Doctors and Vets		
Responsibilities		Supply and Post	Medical	Transport	Personnel

It was from this detachment that the troops were supplied and passed special orders down to the Kampfgruppe commanders. In terms of territorial scope the following SS authorities were expected to maintain the flow of information at all times, on partisan developments using the police telecommunications network:<sup>69</sup>

**Table 27: SS territories brought into the changes (June 1943)**

Ostland-Russland-Nord,	Nordost	Südost	Ost (General gouvernement),	Alpenland	Böhmen-Mähren
Ukraine-Russland-Süd	Weichsel	Warthe	Northwest (Nederland)	France	North (Norway)
Russland-Mitte	Croatia	Serbia	Belgium Sicherheitspolizei		

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> NA, T175, roll 222, 21st June 1943, Der RFSS, TGB.Nr. 198/43 g.Kdos: Bevollmächtigten für die Bandenbekämpfung, 23 October 1943 this was now passed and the Chef der Bandenkampfverbände was named Erich von Dem Bach, SS-Obergruppenführer und General der Polizei.

These new were intended to maximise the available armed response to partisans. In his diary Bach-Zelewski listed the small number of forces available to him when he first became Bevollmächtigter des Reichsführers SS für Bandenbekämpfung.<sup>70</sup> Under this new order the broadest range of armed services were mustered for employment in Bandenbekämpfung:

**Table 28: The available SS-Police forces<sup>71</sup>**

Waffen-SS	Orpo	SD	TN	Alarmheiten
Schutzmannschaften	Postschutz	Bahnpolizei	Army	Zollgrenzschutz
Luftwaffe	Wasserschutzpolizei	Gendarmerie		

#### The strategic activities of Bach-Zelewski

The promotion of Bach-Zelewski placed him in a strategic operational command. The allowance of a personal aircraft and his freedom to visit all sectors and zones confirmed this heightened responsibility. He also began to meet with senior members of the regime and this raised his profile within the greater war effort. These activities should be seen in the light of other senior army commanders who were confined to their respective areas of operations.<sup>72</sup> Many of the entries in Bach-Zelewski's diary, once he took command, were described as appointments rather than tasks. To place these appointments into some form of coherence the following three tables provide tangible evidence of the role he had assumed. The first table concerns his meetings of a purely political nature. As in all cases, they are not exhaustive lists rather a select, but representative, few to provide indication of the variety of activities Bach-Zelewski undertook. In the first table the appointments with Sauckel and Himmler's 'circle of friends' (Freundeskreis) seemed to be linked to the deportation of labour:

**Table 29: Bach-Zelewski's political activities**

DATE	MEETING AND SUBJECT
18 July 1943	Sauckel, von Rinteln, Jeckeln – The collection of Labour
2 August 1943	Dr Frank General Governor of Poland
11 September	RFSS, Admiral Dönitz and 3 Admirals
16 September 1943	Major General Dahlmann, Luftwaffe Ministry
22 September	Troubles with Frank and Krüger in Poland
23 November	RFSS and Croatian Minister of War
12 December	RFSS 'circle of friends' a group of influential businessmen

<sup>70</sup> TVDB, 24<sup>th</sup> October 1942.

<sup>71</sup> NA, T175, roll 222, op cit, 21<sup>st</sup> June 1943, Der RFSS, TGB.Nr. 198/43 g.Kdos.

<sup>72</sup> Only one other SS officer had such free ranging movement and that appears to have been Gottlob Berger.

The meeting with Sauckel concerned the raising and collection of manpower from the occupied lands. Incidentally, Bach-Zelewski had a liaison officer from Sauckel offices permanently attached to his headquarters. According to his diary he met with Sauckel on the 19 April 1943, where he was promised the supply of more armoured cars.<sup>73</sup> The meeting with the circle of friends had been routine in Himmler's schedule since the 1930s. Originally it had been the means to raise the profile of the SS and its funds by encouraging top businessmen to take a 'corporate' stake in its activities. The meetings with members of the SS appear routine, except for the appointment with the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem. Following the meeting the Mufti endorsed the newly raised and largely Islamic 13<sup>th</sup> SS volunteer division from Bosnia. The table of SS meetings also included that of the 4<sup>th</sup> October, when Himmler openly discussed the genocide of the Jews:

**Table 30: Meetings with members of the SS organisation**

DATE	MEETING SUBJECT
4 July - 1943	Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Raising Islamic SS units
9 July - 1943	Croatia – SS Obergruppenführer Kammerhofer Security in Croatia
21 July - 1943	Globocnik's countering Kovpak operations
10 <sup>th</sup> August 1943	Prützmann and Army Group South commander (unnamed) Ukrainian resistance
21 August 1943	Schellenberg RSHA
31 August 1943	Wünnenberg New chief of Orpo
4 October	Posen Conference
3 December	Walter Schimana in Athens

In regards to the Wehrmacht Bach-Zelewski's meetings (listed in Table 31) were with the key figures behind policy, planning and decision-making. The meetings of the 4<sup>th</sup> September were significant because they were clearly strategic. The first concerned discussions over the role of the Luftwaffe in Bandenbekämpfung. The evening meeting with Wagner was an echo of an earlier agreement between Wagner and Heydrich that led to the criminal orders of Operation Barbarossa in 1941.

**Table 31: Meetings with the Wehrmacht**

DATE	MEETING SUBJECT
12 July - 1943	General von Pannwitz – 1st Cossack Division Collapse of discipline and atrocities
16 July 1943	General Walter Warlimont Coordination of the Polozk operation
5 August 1943	General Wöhler, Chief of Staff Army Group Centre [not Rear Area, the whole]
4 September 1943	Chief of the General Staff of the Luftwaffe Korten Luftwaffe in the Bandenkrieg
	Generalquartiermeister Wagner Chief Quartermaster
17 October	Met with Rothkirch new rear area commander in Weissruthenien
12 November 1943	Guest of General Bremer in Riga
15 November 1943	Evening guest of Field Marshal von Busch
17 November 1943	General Küchler commander of Army Group North

<sup>73</sup> NA, IMT, PS-204, this document became a subject of a major disagreement between Bach-Zelewski and Fritz Sauckel, the latter attempting to disguise his control of labour round-up operations,

The surviving testimony of Bach-Zelewski has described some of his and the command's responsibilities. However, there are still areas that largely remain unknown simply because were neither questioned about them at Nuremburg, his diary was vague or the papers are simply missing.

## **V. A Question of Success or Failure**

Earlier in this chapter it was mentioned that a memo recorded the outcome of a meeting between Hitler and Himmler, in which the latter stated he did not want another partisan winter. In this matter Himmler failed. However, in the slogging match with Stalin who wished to undermine German rule in the east and who was prepared to gamble lives in a campaign of attrition to achieve this, the SS were never likely to completely eradicate the partisans. To gauge whether Himmler believed he was winning or not is difficult to locate. His speeches in October 1943 either elaborated on the Bandenkampfverbände and the partisan problem or completely ignored it. In the speech at Bad Schachen he reflected upon the problem of sabotage and espionage. He attacked the Jews, freemasons, Churchill and plutocrats. He also mentioned the partisan problem and the bandit operations, especially their attacks on communications, murders and general criminal behaviour. Himmler mentioned the Waffen-SS brigades and the 20 police regiments employed in the fighting.<sup>74</sup> Peter Padfield has, like many others, mentioned the unfavourable results of Bandenbekämpfung and Himmler's reaction to the pressure from within the regime:

Complaints about the partisans ran like a red thread through the letters from the front. It was said that a 300, even a 400 kilometre-wide ring of partisans separated the eastern front from the homeland. It was true he admitted, that the railway lines were 'so and so often broken' and they took 'half a day, a day, at times three days' to repair. Yet, he assured them, the front was starved neither of food nor of munitions.

As Reichsführer-SS und Chef Deutsche Polizei [sic] I have addressed myself from the beginning of the Russian Campaign to the guerrilla danger and organised my forces correspondingly. I have allocated about twenty-five police regiments, two infantry and one cavalry brigades to it. For the first time in the winter of 1941-2, for the second time in the winter of 1942-3 and for the third time in the present heavy fighting on the eastern front I have

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<sup>74</sup> NA, T175, roll 91, frames 2912923 to, Rede des Reichsführer-SS bei der Arbeitstagung der Befehlshaber in Bad Schachen am 14<sup>th</sup> October 1943.



made over my entire SS formations, namely the brigades and the cavalry division – as it has become meanwhile – to the front in order to help avert difficult situations. The moment I am not facing the partisan they become lively again. I cannot expect them to do away with themselves by suicide.<sup>75</sup>

However, Himmler left a conundrum of a message to the gathering at Posen regarding the Chef der Bandenkampfverbände, the ambitions of the SS and the role of Bach-Zelewski:

In the meantime I have also set up the department of Chief of the anti-partisan units. Our comrade SS-Obergruppenführer von dem Bach is chief of the anti-partisan units. I considered it necessary for the Reichsführer-SS to be in authoritative command in all these battles, for I am convinced that we are best in a position to take action against this enemy struggle, which is a decidedly political one. Except where the units which had been supplied and which we had formed for this purpose were taken from us to fill in gaps at the front, we have been very successful...It is notable that, by setting up this department we have gained for the SS in turn a division, a corps, an army, and the next step, which is the High Command of an army or even a group-if you wish to call it that.<sup>76</sup>

The message could be interpreted that the new office was the means to a further military expansion of the SS. It was also the recognition that Bandenbekämpfung was in fact a political fight against the forces of resistance to German rule and not just a case of military security. It is also noticeable that the bulk of the forces were police formations but he was referring to them as an SS military command.<sup>77</sup> Himmler gave the indication of success in the campaign and so it remains as a conundrum.

## VI. Summary

FeldKommandantur 509 was in the area of Kirowograd. The military government officers were responsible for security in the area including the railway and two supply roads and bridges across major rivers like the Bug. 1942 saw few major incidences of security breaches and sabotage by locals. Only in March 1943 did a Partisan 'band' enter the area of FK 509. They crossed into the area from over the frozen Dnepr River and conducted 3 weeks of mischief.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Peter Padfield, *Himmler Reichsführer SS*, (London, 1990), p 466, citing part of the Posen speeches, 6 October 1943, NA, T175, roll 85.

<sup>76</sup> NA, IMT, PS-1918/19, Himmler's speeches, 4<sup>th</sup> October 1943 to SS Senior officers in Posen.

<sup>77</sup> This was either a slip or provided an indication of the final phase of the SS-police merger.

<sup>78</sup> NA, RG 338, fiche D-157, Protecting supply lines in the Southern Ukraine, Generalleutnant Ludwig Keiper (Luftwaffe).

The Bandenbekämpfung campaign of 1943 was a strategic failure (refer to map 1 on page 356 to gain an impression of the scale of the task that the Germans faced). The intensification of the campaign and the sweeping measures employed against the partisans only served to raise the willingness to resist and withstand German rule. The genocide of the Jews fuelled the fears and insecurities of civilians living under German rule. Scepticism towards the intentions of the Germans was confirmed by the division of families, the plunder of livestock and the destruction of villages. The actions in large communities like the Warsaw Ghetto uprising was also advertisements to the occupied of the depth to which the Nazis would go. Finally the intensification of Nazi fanaticism only led to a further escalation of uncontrollable violence. The year 1943 was crucial in the minds of the Nazi leadership to the future prospects of the war. The final eradication of the Jews and economic exploitation was expected to contribute to victory. The outcome was intended to complete the transformation of the German economy into a self-sufficient system, Lebensraum. When, later in the year, Himmler delivered the infamous Posen Speech, he inadvertently advertised the two SS problems, rapid expansion and responsibilities beyond its resources. The situation had changed again since 1942 when available forces seemed more than adequate. In 1943 the SS chief was now over-stretched and under-manned, and could not be seen to fail at the height of his powers. It is probable that Bach-Zelewski understood these problems but was either unwilling or powerless to change them. The lasting impression had been that the SS had built a credo of success through its limited resources and on faith in the Führer principle. This credo had become institutionalised and leadership to alternative strategies. The reversals on the front lines, the wasting away of the war effort wasted away, and still the SS continued to carry on regardless to the last days of the war.

### **Chapter Seven: Leadership**

[A] psychological force that has nothing to do with morals or good character or even intelligence: nothing to do with ideals or idealism. It is a matter of relative will powers, a basic connection between one animal and the rest of the herd. Not surprisingly it is most in evidence in times or circumstances of danger or challenge. Leadership is not imposed like authority. It is actually welcomed and wanted by the led.<sup>1</sup>

In this chapter we turn to the moral and ethical question of the highly subjective theme of leadership. Martin Edmonds has observed that, 'Leadership is the art of influencing the behaviour of others so as to accomplish a mission in the manner desired by those in command.'<sup>2</sup> Somewhere between the observations of Barnett, quoted above, and Edmonds lay the style of leadership adopted by the chiefs of German security. From the outset it is important that we distinguish between army and police missions. Beckett and Pimlott understood that 'command and control' of the army and the police should be separately defined from the onset of any security operation.<sup>3</sup> The German security system, that later transformed into the Nazi model was far from typical and prone to fusing police and army definitions. Any study of how the Nazis put into practise principles of leadership have to contend with the motivation of mass killing as war and security winning policy. In the long run it is probably more instructive to euphemistically throw away the manuals of leadership, and examine the men individually. In doing this it is necessary to accept that security saw the fusion of a wide range of cultures. Operationally, the consequence of such a fusion of police, army, SS and Nazi cultures, was apt to blend decision-making into what might today appear an irrational cocktail. Part of this irrationality was the caused by the multiple mission statement of German security and partially a consequence of the 'man on the spot'. This chapter will bring a rational to this question of leadership by focusing upon three commanders, Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, Max von Schenckendorff and Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski; by analysing their lives in the context of changing traditions of German security.

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Holmes, *Firing Line*, (London, 1985), quoted from Correlli Barnett, p340

<sup>2</sup> Edmonds, 1988, p32.

<sup>3</sup> Ian F.W. Beckett, and John Pimlott, *Armed Forces and Modern Counter-Insurgency*, (London, 1985), p8.

## I. German Army Tradition

Before the First World War, two senior officers proved by their actions to be mavericks within the German military tradition. The longest serving was Count von Waldersee whose career of intrigue stretched back to the Franco-Prussian War. He had been conveniently shipped off to command the German expeditionary force in the pacification of the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. The other was the more prominent German colonial security figure, Lothar von Trotha. Following the turmoil of the Great War, many of the established traditions rapidly faded from public attention. However a candidate for von Trotha's legacy emerged after the war. Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck had led a guerrilla style campaign in German East Africa (Tanganyika) against the British. He was not captured and made a point of surrendering after the western front armistice; thus began his legend. For military historians he was a distinguished soldier in the unconventional style of T.E Lawrence (of Arabia).<sup>4</sup> Lettow-Vorbeck was in fact an unashamed and gifted self-publicist who sold unchallenged biographies of his adventures (like Lawrence of Arabia). He came to portray himself as the noble guerrilla commander who protected German army traditions as a national heritage.

### The role model: Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck

In spite of all violations, never bowed, show oneself to be tough and receive the help of the gods.<sup>5</sup>

Lettow-Vorbeck, became a German hero, the symbol of an army that deemed itself undefeated in the field. By the 1960s he had acquired another reputation, that of guerrilla leader. Neither interpretation can be fully sustained.<sup>6</sup>

Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck was born in 1870 in Alsace, one of the disputed territories between Germany and France, in the garrison town of Saarlouis. He passed through the Prussian-German military cadet system becoming a professional officer in 1891. He became Lothar von Trotha's adjutant and participated in the suppression of the uprisings in China and Africa. He was twenty-two years younger than von Trotha and was very much a disciple of his methods. Yet when he published his memoirs he managed to

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<sup>4</sup> John Keegan, *The First World War*, (London, 1998).

<sup>5</sup> Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, *Heia Safari!*, (Leipzig, 1919), p165.

<sup>6</sup> Hew Strachan, 'Campaign in German East Africa', in Richard Holmes, *The Oxford Companion to Military History*, (Oxford, 2001), p359.

confine the China and Namibia episodes to one paragraph.<sup>7</sup> He called the conflict in Namibia a bush-war (Buschkrieg) without any further explanation. His various autobiographies centred solely on the over dramatisation of his East African campaign.<sup>8</sup> The impact of Lettow-Vorbeck's campaign came from its continual use as a point of reference as the ideal method of campaign, not just in the 1942 tactical manuals of the colonial school, as discussed in chapter 3, but in the training literature for *Bandenbekämpfung*. His military capabilities under closer investigation appear exaggerated and his later performance as a Freikorps commander was deeply circumspect. To fully comprehend the consequences of Lettow-Vorbeck and his status as role model, we need to investigate his performance more closely.

The German tradition of small war or partisan war was mentioned in chapter one (refer to footnote 15). The partisan was regarded as a legally acceptable method of operating around the flanks of the enemy with smaller even more mobile forces. In 'Heia Safari!' Lettow-Vorbeck defended his actions on the grounds of waging a partisan campaign, an adjunct to the war in Europe.<sup>9</sup> Although there has been little criticism of Lettow-Vorbeck's campaign, Major Sibley did identify one main problem.<sup>10</sup> Sibley noted that the German Governor Schnee understood the 'unwritten rules of international behaviour', and the imposition of neutrality between colonies in the event of major European war. Since 1885 the Anglo-German agreement, under which the German colony of Tanzania was founded, included a neutrality clause in the event of general European war.<sup>11</sup> Lettow-Vorbeck chose to disregard the clause and undertook a military campaign, and as a consequence turning Schnee into a bitter opponent:

I have never seen such a degree of stubbornness...and inability to think further than in purely military terms, combined with a vigorous assertion – inconsiderate and using all means – of military aims against civil

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<sup>7</sup> Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, *Heia Safari!* in 1919 and *Mein Leben* in 1957, later translated as *My Reminiscences of East Africa*.

<sup>8</sup> There have been a wide diversity of sources that have provided an indication that the campaign in Tanganyika might have been less than honourable. The depiction of the Schutztruppen clearing a small village of its inhabitants at the beginning of the film 'The African Queen' used Lettow-Vorbeck's East African campaign as its backdrop. Based upon what we are beginning to learn of German methods, perhaps this incident was closer to the truth and the reality of Lettow-Vorbeck's methods. Released in 1941, this film includes a scene of a German evacuation of a village that today appears remarkably true to life.

<sup>9</sup> Lettow-Vorbeck, 1919, pp 63-81.

<sup>10</sup> Major JR Sibley, *Tanganyikan Guerrilla: East African Campaign 1914-18*, (USA, 1971).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, pp9-22.

institutions... He strove to eliminate me wherever possible.<sup>12</sup>

Kirsten Zirkel found Lettow-Vorbeck's justification for the military mission as primarily a diversion:

Even if the colony were to be lost, with everything that had been created there in decades of work; even if the Schutztruppe were to suffer only defeat, and were finally wiped out completely... even then the Schutztruppe would have done their job and their duty: on condition that they managed to keep a considerable number of enemy soldiers from our homeland... then and only then, would the war in the colony make sense and have moral justification.<sup>13</sup>

As in so many cases the question of success can only be measured in numbers like the figures in a balance sheet set of accounts. Kirsten Zirkel and Sibley both estimated Lettow-Vorbeck's force was originally 15,000 strong in 1916, but at the time of surrender it had shrunk to 2,000 Askaris and 40 Europeans. Lettow-Vorbeck's figures are more detailed and dramatic. He set the opening figure of 2,000 men in 1914, which was increased to 3,000 and later 25,000 men.<sup>14</sup> Sibley on the other hand mentions figures for 1914 of 260 Europeans, 2,472 Askari and 250 carriers.<sup>15</sup> Later Lettow-Vorbeck referred to the 1915 figure of 3,000 Europeans and 'around' 12,000 Askari, with the former made up from naval personnel, civil servants of the army, medical orderlies and the field post.<sup>16</sup> By 1917 his figures had changed to 300 Europeans, 1,700 Askari and 3,000 labourers with which to prosecute the campaign.<sup>17</sup> On the point of surrender they all virtually agree the figures of one governor, twenty officers, ten medical personnel, 125 Europeans, 1,156 Askaris and 1,598 labourers.<sup>18</sup> Either the numbers fell through combat, or he suffered from an extraordinarily high desertion rate. To add one final note of irony, the German Navy lost the cruiser 'Königsberg' during Lettow-Vorbeck's campaign, suggesting a high overall combined loss figure. In effect Lettow-Vorbeck's was a force in decline and his collapse inevitable. The British had deployed 111,371 men by the war's end so his mission succeeded from that perspective,

<sup>12</sup> Kirsten Zirkel, *Military power in German colonial policy: the Schutztruppen and their leaders in East and South-West Africa, 1888-1918*, in David Killingray and David Omissi (ed), 2000, p107.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p108.

<sup>14</sup> Lettow-Vorbeck, 1918, pp 4, 6, and 14 respectively.

<sup>15</sup> Sibley, 1971, pp18-19.

<sup>16</sup> Lettow-Vorbeck, 1919, p81.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p191.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p266.

and deserved the thanks of many men who might otherwise have been slaughtered on the western front. In March 1919 Lettow-Vorbeck led a march of his German colonial soldiers along the Unter den Linden and under the Brandenburg Gate. It was the victory march of the last undefeated German Imperial Army. Lettow-Vorbeck was only home for a short while before he became involved in the Freikorps and participated in the so-called Kapp Putsch. In the later 1920s he turned to politics and entered the Reichstag. He also became a leading figure in the colonial organisations that demanded a return of the colonies.<sup>19</sup>

Klaus Theweleit has conducted a critical review of the literature written by some of the leading commanders of the Freikorps. One of the men identified was Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck. Theweleit noted that he was the son of an East Prussian Junker, with a reputation for hard fighting in the colonies against tribesmen and in Germany crushing workers revolts, and that in his spare time Lettow-Vorbeck had a passion for hunting. Theweleit referred to a comment made by Lettow-Vorbeck in his later memoirs. On his way home he wrote, ‘ In Rome, I was struck by the charming sculpture of Mars in repose. He has put aside sword and shield and is smiling wistfully as cupid strokes his knee, eyeing him impishly.’<sup>20</sup> A question arises about Lettow-Vorbeck’s suppressed sexuality from his writings in *Heia Safari!*<sup>21</sup> The combination of questionable military performance (if not starting an unnecessary campaign) form contradictions between his military standing and normal human feelings, which cannot easily be separated when attempting to discover the real person rather than the legend. The outcome of such analysis breaks the myth of Lettow-Vorbeck and rightly minimises his overblown achievements.

#### The Wehrmacht professional: Max von Schenckendorff

The military-industrial complex is not a reality; it is a concept which is useful as a shorthand way of referring to an interdependence in advanced

<sup>19</sup> BA MA, N103/7 Reichswehr Brigade, /25. In China during the Boxer Rebellion, /26, 32,33,34,35 in Südwestafrika, /54, 55, 56 Kapp Putsch, /60 illegalising the SA and SS, /63 the nature of the Südwestafrika Schutztruppe, /66, the fighting in Boxer Rebellion, /67, 68, 69, 70, 71,72, 73,74,75,76,77, 113 the nature of the fighting against the Herero, /85 papers on civilian internment, /103, 104, 105, German colonies, /111 intervention on behalf of old soldiers 1950.

<sup>20</sup> Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, (Minnesota, 1987), p36.

<sup>21</sup> Lettow-Vorbeck, 1919, his memoirs indicated an interest in young black boys. There were pictures in *Heia Safari!* of Lettow-Vorbeck seated while surrounded by young African boys and a hunting trophy on page 191 and on page 223 there was a line drawing of a handsome young African boy. His memoirs indicated affection for young black boys.

industrial states between armed services, governmental departments and industry... [like the] German Wehrmacht approach of a centralised planning body coordinating the plans and preparations of the three armed services.<sup>22</sup>

Martin Edmonds has encapsulated some of the ideas of the leading theorists from the field of civil-military relations within two dimensions, the organisation of the armed services and their role within society.<sup>23</sup> Edmonds suggested the armed services were professions in common with those of civilian organisations, 'specialists or managers in the application of violence.'<sup>24</sup> The armed services as a profession are sanctioned and made legitimate by state laws and codes, 'Armed services can, thus, immediately be seen in sharp contrast with illegal violent organisations, such as criminal gangs, guerrilla movements, terrorist groups and mobs.'<sup>25</sup> The armed services since the Nineteenth Century have become complex organisations and institutions. This rise of modern military structures, with increased the levels of bureaucracy, has introduced a distinction between the 'teeth' (term used to describe fighting units) and the 'tail' (normally associated with support formations). The concept of the 'rear-area' as a harbour for the specialists and skilled members of the armed forces has been a German twentieth century development. The diversity of the modern military organisation has led to an influx of civilians and this has increased as the army has undertaken civil tasks such as crisis management in emergencies. Similarly, Edmonds also suggested that the direction of modern warfare has placed 'a premium on the officer's managerial skills rather than leadership.'<sup>26</sup> The concept of leadership within the German Army was more than just fulfilling the mission, style, character and ability, were by 1941 paralleled by political allegiance. In this context, Edmonds saw the creation of the staff system as a means to providing army commanders with specialist advice. In this sense, the general staff was a service provider. Consequently, this led to the further expansion of specialists and professionals within the military system.

Utilising the model for analysing armies proposed by Martin Edmonds, it is not surprising to conclude that the Wehrmacht was, in its time, an advanced military

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<sup>22</sup> Edmonds, 1988, pp161-174.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, Edmonds recognises that the study of the armed forces is an 'eclectic and multidisciplinary' requiring the utilisation of a broad range of analytical techniques.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, pp22-23.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p24.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p36



organisation. The Wehrmacht was conceptually a highly advanced military bureaucracy with a level of professionalism that had been formed through German traditions. Since 1870 the Quartermaster General of the Army had been responsible for the administration and security of an occupation. By the Second World War this balance of employment between civilians and soldiers had been institutionalised. The civilians were normally reservists or men who had been veterans of the First World War. This was not why they were employed; rather it was for their civilian professions that they were important for the army. Two examples of these kinds of careers were those of Paul Beckmann and Paul Beyer. Beckmann was a member of the military administration of Belgium and Northern France. He was born in Düsseldorf on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 1889. A protestant, he attended the universities of Oxford, Munich and Bonn where he studied political science and jurisprudence. He volunteered for the Great War in 1914 and served in the front until 1918 as senior Lieutenant. In 1920 he became a local law official and later a lawyer.<sup>27</sup> Beyer was born 24<sup>th</sup> March 1889 in Jesterburg, Hanover. He attended the universities of Munich, Berlin and Göttingen. He became a Major General and a deputy commander of the Military Administration in Belgium and Northern France. He was responsible for all economic activities in the occupation. Eventually he practised law in Berlin, and joined the Nazi Party in 1933. Later he became a non-executive director for several companies including textile, insurance, sugar, paper and agricultural concerns. In 1940 he was promoted to chief of the Haupttreuhandstelle-Ost (instrumental in the plundering of Poland). From 1940 to 1942 Beyer was chief of Oberfeldkommandantur 670 and later the Chief of Military Administration of all the OFKs, finally becoming chief officer of the economic branch.

A further responsibility of the Quartermaster General was the selection of military personnel to serve in the occupation administration, sending candidates on specialist induction courses.<sup>28</sup> This proximity to large numbers of civilians almost certainly contributed broadening the character of the professional status of staff officers. Following the interrogation of a German officer the qualities desired in a staff officer were listed:

1. Devotion to the commander, whereas the commander might be 'corrupt or

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<sup>27</sup> NA, T1270, roll 23, frame 0178, interrogation report.

<sup>28</sup> Generalmajor Toppe et al, FMS, P-010, op cit.

unsoldierly' the chief of staff officer had to take the self gratification of having done the job well,

2. Knowledge of the procedures and terminology of command. The best officers were able to get the orders issued in clear understandable language. This was an increasing problem for the army.

3. Assistance in command. The staff officers usually were better trained than their commanders who when taking over divisions might have only had regimental experience.

4. Ability to advise. The staff officer was to advise not decide. According to Bonin this was lost in the Nazi philosophy of Führerprinzip which made obsolescent the joint responsibility of staff and command.

5. Character. They were usually chosen by character rather than ability.

6. The defeats began to undermine the confidence held in the staff. By 1944 they were seen as distant fellows who looked after themselves.

7. Knowledge and flexibility. Sober and realistic study of the facts was essential.<sup>29</sup>

Among a series of unconnected interrogations, intended also, to lead to a report on the German general staff Karl Allmendinger formed a potted history of the German general staff corps.<sup>30</sup> In discussing the role of the quartermaster, Allmendinger proved to be quite dismissive of its status:

The supply officer of a division, the Quartiermeister of corps, and the Oberquartiermeister of the Army had some familiarity with technical matters... Every general staff officer was supposed to master the principles of supply, but the career was not popular. Tactics were considered more interesting and more honourable, and the inferior students gravitated into the Quartiermeister branch. A lower position such as operation officer of division would be preferable to a Quartiermeister of Corps, since it carried more prestige and was more interesting. Of course, some excellent men were very apt in the supply field, and the Army Oberquartiermeister were usually selected from this outstanding group in Abteilung 6... There were no special training in supply in the general staff, apart from the course which all officers had to take, but a short supply course of one or two weeks was given in the form of demonstrations and imaginary war-supply problems. The officers selected would rotate various imaginary assignments under conditions of advance and retreat, and learn how to ensure supplies

<sup>29</sup> NA T1270, roll 23, report on the German General Staff by Bogislaw von Bonin, 28<sup>th</sup> December 1945. The blatant sentimentality of what might have been, but not under Nazism, does not detract from the types of functions Bonin was identifying.

<sup>30</sup> NA T1270, roll 23, 'The Character of the German General Staff 1925 to 1945', 28<sup>th</sup> December 1945.

for the forces involved. This course, facetiously referred to as the 'Mehlreise' (Flour Tour), was held in attractive surroundings, and the officers ate and slept well, since the supply men knew how to get the best of everything. Ambitious officers, however, dreaded to be sent on it, as it was a sign that they were headed for an inferior career.

Irrespective of this condescending view of the general staff officer, the German army relied on increasingly professional quartermaster officers who were able to work comfortably in both civilian and military environments. The culmination of the development in this expertise was the rear-area commander of 1941-1944.

In contrast with Trotha and Lettow-Vorbeck, Max von Schenckendorff was the embodiment of this developing professionalism. He came from a long established and noble military family. He was born on the 24 February 1875 in Prenzlau. Schenckendorff's grandfather had been one of Field Marshal Blücher's generals in 1815 and a member of his family had served as an adjutant to Friedrich the Great. He entered the army as a cadet and became a Lieutenant in the 47<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment on the 17<sup>th</sup> March 1894. He was promoted to senior lieutenant in October 1903 after serving with two airship battalions. For the next three years he attended the Kriegsakademie (war academy), leaving to become a regimental adjutant. In 1914 he was a battalion commander. In 1918 he joined the general staff and at the end of the war was the commander of the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. Schenckendorff was reactivated on the 1 July 1938 as a reserve officer with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Army Corps. His first formal posting was as commander of 13<sup>th</sup> Border Defence Force on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939. On the 25<sup>th</sup> September 1939, he became commandant of Posen military district. After two years in Poland he was placed in command of the Rear Area command of Army Group Centre and activated in September 1941. In 1942 the Red Army published a brief reference to him in a British publication:

From order No.304/41 of von Schenkendorf (sic), Infantry General commanding the main body of the Central German army Group, March 1942,

A crowd of soldiers burst into the guards' quarters and lynched four Russian civilians.... After prolonged beating with whips the Russians were soaked in petrol and set alight. An officer, a captain, who was present at the lynching

calmly looked on at the activities of the soldiers.<sup>31</sup>

It was a story that had been twisted to suit the picture the Russians had wanted to portray. Indeed there had been a dreadful incident where German soldiers had behaved criminally but Schenckendorff had in fact court-martialled the officer and men responsible. We know precious little about Schenckendorff apart from the very basic details of his marriage, career and family. After he died in 1943 Field Marshal von Kluge wrote a moving letter of his condolences to Schenckendorff's wife.<sup>32</sup> Years later Schenckendorff's son wrote a letter to the Bundesarchiv explaining why he believed his father had remained a professional soldier to the end.<sup>33</sup> Irrespective of this and his behaviour regarding the handling of unruly soldiers there is evidence to suggest that Schenckendorff was responsible for war crimes.<sup>34</sup> The question of course is why such a distinguished and capable soldier was prepared to order such actions in the twilight years of his career. In the case of Bach-Zelewski, we face even harder questions to answer.

## II. A Junker in the SS: Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski

Himmler strove to create a new elite officer class similar to that of the Wehrmacht but based upon deeply political foundations. In the opinion of Robert Koehl this situation encouraged a constant state of intrigue, power struggles and the striving to go beyond the orders of a mission.<sup>35</sup> The existing interpretation of the SS has largely been based upon data gleamed from the 1930s, the build-up phase of SS, and while much of this work has yielded very important results, our collective knowledge of the SS in the later war years remains much weaker.<sup>36</sup> In many respects historians have tried to use these

<sup>31</sup> Soviet Embassy London, *New Soviet Documents on Nazi Atrocities*, (London, 1943), p49.

<sup>32</sup> BA MA, MSg 1/2855, personal papers of Schenckendorff.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> In particular see Hamburg Institut für Sozialforschung(Hsg), *Verbrechen Der Wehrmacht: Dimensionen Des Vernichtungskrieges 1941-1944*, (Hamburg, 2002), career outlinep438, and published details of his antipartisan school, p464-467.

<sup>35</sup> Koehl, 1983. Koehl's study, like so many, of the SS ran out of steam by the time he came to within reach of the events of 1942-45. As with so many histories the events of the 1930s came to dominate rather than reflect a phase in SS development.

<sup>36</sup> Here is just a small collection of works where the image of the 1930s dominates the scholars interpretation of the later SS institution. Höhne, Heinz, op cit; Helmut Krausnick, Martin Broszat; op cit, Roger Manvell, *SS and Gestapo: rule by Terror*, (London, 1972); Andrew Mollo, *To the Death's Head True: The story of the SS*, (London, 1982); Gerald Reitlinger, op cit; Gerhard Rempel, *Hitler's Children : The Hitler Youth and the SS*, (North Carolina Press, 1989); Reinhard Rürup, *Topography of Terror: Gestapo, SS and Reichssicherheitshauptamt on the Prinz-Albrecht-Terrain - a documentation*, (Berlin, 1989); Stein, op cit; Sydnor, op cit; Bernd Wegner, 'The 'Aristocracy of National Socialism': The role of

earlier interpretations to answer later questions, with only limited success.<sup>37</sup> From 1942-43 Hitler called upon a different calibre of leader, men who reflected the changing nature of the war. What had gone before only had a bearing in terms of the willingness to carry out orders however extreme. This later period of the war was a time of considerable confusion and appears in many ways to suggest contradictions. This was a time of massive expansion of the SS-Police bureaucracy while at the same time there were a group of individual senior SS officers who came to the fore after 1943. They were exceedingly reckless in their ruthless craving of political and military power.

The epitome of the emerging SS leadership of 1943 was Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski. He was born on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1899, in Lauenberg, Pomerania (now Leborg, Poland). Originally his given name was Erich Julius Eberhard von Zelewski.<sup>38</sup> Otto Johannes von Zelewski was born in Zeinblau on the 19/20 May 1859. He worked in various jobs including civil service, insurance and in agriculture, and had died on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1911, in Dortmund. His mother Eveline Schimanski was born in Thorn on the 16<sup>th</sup> April 1862 or 1864. His mother and father had married in Lauenberg on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 1890. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1925 Erich von Zelewski acquired the name 'von dem' by decree of a local justice ministry becoming 'von dem Bach-Zelewsky'.<sup>39</sup>

Bach-Zelewski married Ruth Apfeld on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 1921 they had six children. Ruth's family came from Ratibor, her father Karl was born on the 13<sup>th</sup> July 1855. Her mother, Maria Natalia Marbach, was also born in Ratibor on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1875. Her parents were married in Ratibor on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1896.<sup>40</sup> We know from

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the SS in National Socialist Germany', in H.W. Koch (ed), *Aspects of the Third Reich*, (London, 1985), pp430-450; and, James J. Weingartner, *Hitler's Guard: Inside the Führer's Personnel SS Force*, (Berkley, 1990).

<sup>37</sup> Koehl, 1983, pp203-204, It is particularly notable that Koehl's explanation of the Bandenkampf-Verbände failed to realise its full impact upon SS organisation.

<sup>38</sup> The details of his early life come from his SS personnel files, a pamphlet by W. Bartoszewski, *Von Dem Bach*, (Warsaw, 1961) and Andrej Angrick, *Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, Himmlers Mann für alle Fälle*, in Ronald Smelser and Enrico Syring (Hrsg), *Die SS: Elite unter dem Totenkopf: 30 Lebensläufe*, (Paderborn, 2000), pp28-44.

<sup>39</sup> NA, SS personnel file Bach-Zelewski, reverse side of his SS-Ahnentafel (family tree). The date of this decision was inscribed in pencil on a copy of his family tree by a representative of the SS Race and Resettlement Office (RuSHA) in 1935. The spelling of his name attracted the attention of the SS race specialist because it was written in the Polish style – 'Zelewsky'.

<sup>40</sup> NA, SS personnel file Bach-Zelewski. Letter and statement, Ruth von dem Bach, 24th June 1941. In June 1941 Ruth made a statement regarding a minor incident involving a German flak soldier. In the community of their family home Ruth von dem Bach-Zelewski had allowed a disused house to be used for the girls of the Bund Deutscher Mädchen (BDM) and its garage was given over to a flak battery's

his diary entries that he referred to Ruth as 'Mutti' (as in mother). In the time he was away from the army and the SS, Bach-Zelewski owned a farm near Dühringshof, near Frankfurt on the Oder. Later he set up his home in Breslau with the six children.<sup>41</sup> He had a 'little home' with his 'little family' in Breslau with offices in Kattowitz; 'I was the boss around the house at all times.'<sup>42</sup> Late into the war, when Bach-Zelewski was chief, he used his aeroplane to visit Breslau over 40 times between June 1943 and July 1944.<sup>43</sup>

Bach-Zelewski was a veteran soldier of the Great War and this was by far the most influential experience of his formative years. He joined the army in 1914 and was commissioned Lieutenant in 1917. He served with the 176<sup>th</sup> Infantry and 10<sup>th</sup> Grenadier Regiments and was awarded both the Iron Cross first and second classes. We know from a remark in his diary that he served in the Croatia area during 1915.<sup>44</sup> From 1918 he became an active participant in the Freikorps, fighting against Polish incursions into Silesia. He was Lieutenant of the 12<sup>th</sup> Company of the 10<sup>th</sup> Grenadier Regiment during the battles on the border in 1918-19. During the Kapp Putsch he was the Ordinance Officer of the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment based in Moabit in Berlin, his only comment on the affair was, 'The German officers were always involved in the politics of the state.'<sup>45</sup> He joined the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of the newly formed Reichswehr but left the army in 1924. Between 1924-30, Bach-Zelewski is alleged to have served part time in the Grenzschutz (Border Security) on the German-Polish border.<sup>46</sup> During the latter part of the 1930s he was assigned to the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment as an army major.<sup>47</sup> Later when

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cooking facilities. An incident followed when one of the soldiers was found joking with the girls and Ruth told him off for inappropriate behaviour. Later the soldier was arrested, but in her statement she suggested it was a silly incident to make such great fuss about, but she admonished the soldier for not having stood soldierly to attention when a German mother had spoken to him. She also complained about the man's officers for not having asked her directly about the incident. Within just a few weeks of the letter her husband was to take a leading part in the genocide of the Jews in Eastern Europe

<sup>41</sup> BZ-IMT, 25<sup>th</sup> October 1945.

<sup>42</sup> IWM, USMT, Hostage Case 7, pp 404-409.

<sup>43</sup> TVDB, we also know that on at least one occasion he used the visits to spend upwards of two hours with his children. This drifting home suggests either he was not fully occupied, or he was allowed such treats to help him get through the extremes of his work or he was an inveterate absconder. They were not confined to weekends or regular days. He appeared to ensure the visits were rarely more than three days and on different days. He held meetings in Breslau to ensure he could slip off for a brief family visit.

<sup>44</sup> TVDB, 6<sup>th</sup> July 1943.

<sup>45</sup> IWM, IMT, interrogation, no, 2599, 27<sup>th</sup> June 1947.

<sup>46</sup> NA, SS personnel file, Bach-Zelewski. In a letter of the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1940 he requested Himmler to acquaint himself with a book by a certain Major von Bulow, 'Preussischer Militarismus zur Zeit Wilhelm II', in which the author praised Bach-Zelewski for his efforts in these border battles with the Poles. However at no time does his SS personnel file refer to Freikorps or other post war para-military activity.

<sup>47</sup> NA, SS personnel file, Bach-Zelewski, letter 8<sup>th</sup> January 1937.

he became a HSSPF his duties concerned policing: forming units, organising stations, and leading larger police units. There is no evidence of any police training amongst his papers.

### Bach-Zelewski's SS membership

In a racially based culture like the SS, holding the correct name and family background was part of the way to claiming seniority. Upon joining the SS in 1930, the details of his life began to change again and gather upon itself a new image. His career in the SS saw a series of transformations of his personal details from 1935 when he began signing himself 'Erich von dem Bach' on official documents. On the 28<sup>th</sup> November 1940, the Breslau Justice Ministry, where he just so happened to be the HSSPF, agreed to the formal removal of the 'Zelewski' part of his name.<sup>48</sup> He later told Himmler that he had the evidence to prove that he was related to Johannes von dem Bach-Zelewski, who in 1695, was the last Knight Commander of the Teutonic Order of Knights in Marienburg.<sup>49</sup> It is not known what came from this attempt to establish a link to a noble past but for the rest of the war he was known as Erich von dem Bach.<sup>50</sup>

The SS in the 1930s was an order where religion and paganism were in a perpetual state of flux. Bach-Zelewski changed his religion from Catholic to Evangelist in 1933 and from 1938 he began to use the term *gottgläubig*. This was of course the SS orthodoxy Himmler had been striving for throughout the organisation. It was a term that was to imply belief in something but not necessarily a Christian God.<sup>51</sup> For a career SS officer like Bach-Zelewski, religion was just another aspect of his life that could be manipulated to enhance his promotion potential. An interesting letter located in his SS personal file; he had undertaken a university lectureship (*Lehrauftrag*) at the University of Breslau, in religious science in 1939. The Faculty of Philosophy had a Theology department under a Professor Wendel, specialised in the Old Testament and Bach-Zelewski taught on this subject.<sup>52</sup> Later still he told the Judges at Nuremberg that the

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<sup>48</sup> NA, SS personnel file, Bach-Zelewski, letter to Himmler 4 December 1940.

<sup>49</sup> NA, SS personnel file, Bach-Zelewski, Himmler replied on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1940 that he wished Bach-Zelewski success. For an insight into this order Desmond Seward, *The Monks of War: the Military Religious Orders*, (London, 1972); see also, Michael C. B. Burleigh, 'The German Order and Prussian Society a Noble Corporation in Crisis, 1410-1466', PhD, University of London, (1982),.

<sup>50</sup> Bach-Zelewski: SS personnel file, 1940 and TVDB.

<sup>51</sup> BA BL, BDC, SS personnel file, Bach-Zelewski.

<sup>52</sup> NA, SS personnel file, Bach-Zelewski, letter 26<sup>th</sup> April 1939.

SS had arrested his cousin, a Catholic priest, in 1940, who was also called Bach-Zelewski.<sup>53</sup> He said Himmler had used it as a blackmail weapon to get him to comply in the killing orders, although later in the trial he said this cousin was really only a distant relative. His religiousness rose to the realms of sentimental pathos in his war diary. In the first reference, occurred after his return from medical leave in April 1942, and is discussed later in this chapter. The second was written some time between November 1942 and January 1943:

To the unknown God

What is true and untrue – loyal to Adolf Hitler and as an officer I accept my fate, having taken god's way. Afraid of pain and death, like any normal man but prepared to take God's way. I beg for the life of Adolf Hitler and victory for the nation. I beg for the life of my wife and children. Bestowal of the love of a good woman I loved and who cares for her husband and children, the only woman I ever loved. Ensure the life of the wives and children. Children who will become the true German people. Give me luck but also from the horrors and creatures of terror. Grant me merciful salvation, strength and power never to be afraid of the intrigues of the RFSS; and that I am not afraid. Take command of trusted men. In my downfall, let me die as the idol of my men; so many good comrades in 1914-18 and in this new war. Let me honour them.

Von dem Bach, SS-Obergruppenführer und General der Polizei<sup>54</sup>

On the 12<sup>th</sup> December 1935, he wrote to the SS Race and Resettlement office to explain that repeated efforts to get documents from Poland to confirm his ancestry had not been forthcoming. He also mentioned that the proof of his wife's Aryan ancestry was in her brother's possession, the local police chief of Neisse-Schlesien. He promised to continue to speed things up. However, on the 11<sup>th</sup> January 1937, the local SS Race And Resettlement Officer, Breslau, made it clear that all their efforts to discover Bach-Zelewski's family history had been blunted by the Poles. He later stated that he was half-Slav which he had disguised from the SS and also said his family ancestry had Hohenzollern nobles. In 1947, he believed he could prove his ancestry back to the fifteenth century, a mixture of Poles, Prussians and Hohenzollerns.

During a later war crimes trial Bach-Zelewski referred to links with a colonial officer:

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<sup>53</sup> IWM, USMT, RuSHA trial, case 8, p396.

<sup>54</sup> TVDB, p63.



The brother of my father was the first commander of the German Protection Troops under Dr. Karl Peters. After the last war, the monument of von Zelewski which after the 1st WW was destroyed, was built again by the English in memory of this man the monument is called von Zelewski monument... And one of Schill's officers was also called von Zelewski....<sup>55</sup>

The SS personnel file provides more evidence of his colonial hero relative.<sup>56</sup> Emil von Zelewski, his uncle, was the officer commanding the Imperial Schutztruppe in German East Africa (Tanzania). The native population allegedly referred to him as *Bwana!Tyundo* (sic – although it could be Nyundo – the hammer, see footnote 58 below), he had lived in the colony since 1885. Originally the local German force had been called the Willmanns-Truppe. In 1891, Willmanns had been recalled to Germany and von Zelewski had taken over and the Governor of the colony von Soden, ordered him to attack rebel tribes in the south. A force of fourteen European officers led a force of 362 Askari men into the bush and mountain ranges to the south. They were repeatedly ambushed, until on the 17<sup>th</sup> August 1891, during a march, one of von Zelewski's officers's shot at an eagle for sport. He had inadvertently precipitated the signal for the guerrilla forces to attack. The leading members of the Askari column ran away, leaving von Zelewski and a few of his remaining men to be overrun and killed. The guerrilla that speared von Zelewski was honoured with the name 'Bwana!Tyundo' (sic). A memorial was built to commemorate von Zelewski and the ambush.<sup>57</sup>

### The ideological warrior

Four moments of Bach-Zelewski's life before the Second World War indicate the depth of his development as the epitome of the SS 'political soldier'. In the period 1931 to 1941, he was to establish himself as one of Himmler's most influential subordinates. His political initiation did not begin when he joined the Nazi Party in January 1930 (membership number 489,101). His SS personnel file contains a curriculum vitae

<sup>55</sup> USMT, Hostage case 7, pp8994-8995. At the end of this quote it is interesting to note that Bach-Zelewski tried to link himself with the famous act of patriotism, the execution of von Schill.

<sup>56</sup> Dr. Karl Peters: *Die Gründung von Deutsch-Ostafrika, Kolonialpolitische Erinnerungen und Betrachtungen*, (1906), *Mäberes über Kwawa, Jambo*, (1930), pp 79-84. What Bwana!Tyundo actually means has been difficult to ascertain.

<sup>57</sup> Zirkel, 2000, pp91-113. Zirkel said that von Zelewski was noted for his brutal methods in fighting the guerrillas. Erick J. Mann, *Mikono ya damu: "Hands of Blood": African Mercenaries and the Politics of Conflict in German East Africa, 1888-1904*, (Frankfurt am Main, 2002), suggests much of what was written about von Zelewski absolved him of his military failure. Mann also suggested that his brutality had in fact earned the title *Bwana Mikono wa Damu* (Mountain Hands of Blood) or just *Nyundo* (the hammer), pp135-231.

(Lebenslauf) dating from 1944, in which it stated that in 1919 Bach-Zelewski became a member of the Deutsche Völkisch Party, a monarchist peoples right wing party acceptable to the Nazis, and that this had strong political links with the landowning Junkers east of the River Elbe. This early political career assisted him in becoming a Reichstag member on behalf of the Nazis in 1932. In July 1931, he joined the SS with membership number 9,831.<sup>58</sup> Bach-Zelewski's meteoric rise within the SS began with the task to build the 27<sup>th</sup> SS-Standarte (regiment) in Frankfurt on the Oder and Schneidemühl. The early positions he filled do not explain his executive development. This can only be explained by identifying the circles he moved in.

His relationship to Himmler was almost certainly very close and sealed in the 1930s. This can be seen in his early attempts to defend Himmler, albeit weakly, in Nuremberg. Himmler was also one of his children's godparents, and the Reichsführer always remembered them on their birthdays with letters and presents. When he was promoted, Himmler ensured that Bach-Zelewski received some extra benefit. In 1941, Himmler granted him 100,000 RM to spend without explanation.<sup>59</sup> Later, whenever Bach-Zelewski was ill, Himmler ensured the finest medical facilities were made available. Within Bach-Zelewski's closest circle, the most significant figure was Kurt Daluge who for a time was his direct superior and who thought very highly of him.<sup>60</sup> Both had been youthful volunteers in the First World War; it is therefore highly likely that Daluge and Bach-Zelewski had a closer, more comradely relationship than the latter had with Himmler. The SS records show that Daluge's assessment of Bach-Zelewski was very high, stating that his National Socialist attitude was very good; that his character was loyal, honest, impulsive and unrestrained; and that his relationship to his fellow SS men or officers was equally very good. Daluge and Bach-Zelewski remained close throughout the early days of the Russian campaign and especially during the killing actions in which they worked together.

Bach-Zelewski's rapid promotion to Obergruppenführer came alongside significant postings such as the SS-Oberabschnitt (regional headquarters) Königsberg in

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<sup>58</sup> BZ-USMT, 22 August 1945.

<sup>59</sup> NA, SS personnel file, Bach-Zelewski, 23 August 1941. This amount was quite extraordinary, according to Friedrich Wilhelm, *Die Polizei im NS-Staat*, (Paderborn, 1997), p257, the average monthly salary for a police president at that time was 1,200.00 RM, 850 RM for a Police Director, 440.00 RM for a Police senior Lieutenant and 145.00 RM for the simple Wachtmeister.

<sup>60</sup> BZ-IMT, 24 October 1945.

East Prussia, one of the largest SS regions. His promotions were also closely linked to political actions. He had been involved in the Stennes Putsch, with Kurt Daluege, and during the Röhm Putsch he had been in Berlin with Himmler, Göring, Daluege and Goebbels. On the 2nd July 1934, Bach-Zelewski ordered his subordinates, SS driver Paul Zummach and SS-Hauptsturmführer Deinhardt, to kill Anton Freiherr von Hohberg und Buchwald in Eylau (Ilawa) in East Prussia.<sup>61</sup>

Numerous references to the 1930s and Bach-Zelewski's rise have generally referred to an alleged argument between Bach-Zelewski and Gauleiter Koch of Königsberg. Bach-Zelewski was the senior SS officer in Königsberg responsible for both the SS and Gestapo. During an event called the Ostmesse (eastern conference) of August 1935, the economics minister Hjalmar Schacht attended to give a speech on the new economics. In the middle of the speech Bach-Zelewski stormed out. Later, he alleged there had been an argument between him and Koch over the latter's blatant corruption. However, others in attendance also witnessed the proceedings and the ensuing troubles and they provide an altogether different picture.<sup>62</sup> The representatives of both the army and the navy reported the incident to their respective commanding officers. These documents provide us with the real story for, during the Ostmesse, Bach-Zelewski objected to Schacht's call for a general amnesty of attacks on Jews and Jewish property. Schacht had said it was bad for business and especially trade with foreign countries where Germany needed goodwill and overseas currencies. Bach-Zelewski lost his temper and called Schacht a traitor to the German people and said the Jews had to pay for their crimes. Bach-Zelewski ordered the SS and police to leave, as a deliberate anti-Semitic statement. The members of the armed services also stated that Bach-Zelewski was a good comrade and had been correct in his action. They gave their endorsement of his actions, his professionalism and the stand he had made. For Koch, it was not the words of Schacht but the deeds of Bach-Zelewski that he took exception to.

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<sup>61</sup> This case later led to Bach-Zelewski's arrest and his life imprisonment in 1961. Anton von Hohberg was an SS officer who had passed secrets to the army and was either to be arrested or executed. Years later Bach-Zelewski referred to the 'Röhm Putsch' (Nazis term) when he wrote of it in passing in his diary in 1944.

<sup>62</sup> NA, OKW T-77, roll 795, frame 55252418, 20<sup>th</sup> August 1935: letter/report from Roschmann of Kriegsmarinedienststelle, Königsberg, Prussia, g.Kdos 47i/35, to Oberbefehlshaber der Kriegsmarine z.Hd. von Herrn Kpt. z. s. Donsch o.v.i.a., Berlin 35; and 20 August 1935, Report from the Chief of Staff of Wehrkreiskommando I, Königsberg, Prussia, Nr. 218/35 g.Kdos. to Oberbefehlshaber des Heeres; and Dr. Hjalmar Schacht, Reichsbankpräsidenten und beauftragten Reichswirtschaftsministerium, zur Eröffnung der Deutschen Ostmesse, 18<sup>th</sup> August 1935.

Though Bach-Zelewski had alleged that Koch was corrupt and there was much evidence for making such an allegation, his action was directed toward Schacht. Of course, given the occasions when Bach-Zelewski had worked as a tool for the regime, one might surmise that Göring could only welcome an attack on Schacht.<sup>63</sup>

#### The commander: strategic and tactical Vision

Ruthless and ambitious in performing his duties in Russia, he was admired by Hitler for his improvisational skills and strong military presence. However, he was a total failure as a corps commander, having no military skills as a higher formation and military leader, and never visited the front nor ensured the flow of supplies for his troops.<sup>64</sup>

Discovering any serious post-war assessment of Bach-Zelewski as a commander per se is virtually impossible. The comment by Mark Yerger does not compare with all the known facts. For three years he controlled large numbers of men and formations without evidence of any breakdown. There is absolutely no evidence of an inability to concern himself over supply. On the contrary he made regular visits to his supply bases and depot areas. He also had a competent staff for such matters to assist in his work. He also clearly took an interest in training and was mindful of forming an agreement with Schenckendorff over respective spheres of influence to prevent chaos. In fact there are moments when his methods appear to have been highly successful. The view Bach-Zelewski had of his promotion to Himmler's plenipotentiary for Bandenbekämpfung was that of a reduction to a minor brigade commander.<sup>65</sup> He wrote that his demotion had been a consequence of his claims (not stated in his diary) against Curt von Gottberg, who was his replacement as HSSPF Russland-Mitte.<sup>66</sup> This feeling of being victimised through others' decisions was a serious weakness in Bach-Zelewski's character. When he met with persons who reminded him of his past, he tended to become overly sentimental.

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<sup>63</sup> John Weitz, *Hitler's Bankier: Hjalmar Schacht*, (Munich, 1998), p257. Recalling the incident years after the war, Schacht said that when Bach-Zelewski got up to protest about his remarks concerning stopping the attacks on Jews and Freemasons, he wanted to say, 'The men's' toilets are along the corridor, second door on the right.' However, given the authority of Bach-Zelewski he decided to hold his tongue.

<sup>64</sup> Mark Yerger, *Waffen-SS Commanders: The Army, Corps and Divisional Leaders of a Legend*. Augsburg to Kreutz, (USA, 1997), p38

<sup>65</sup> TVDB, December 1942.

<sup>66</sup> TVDB, p63.

The case for or against Bach-Zelewski as a commander must be set against the mission. In 1941, his mission was genocide and he seemed to perform exceptionally in that task. As a field officer in the fight against the partisans he showed himself to be more than capable of comprehending the situation and acting in a manner that achieved the most favoured results. In June 1943, Himmler faced two strategic priorities and one, the eradication of the partisans, was passed to Bach-Zelewski. He had ten months to complete the larger part the task; in reality, given the scope of his operations, even a fitter and more capable officer would have found it difficult to fulfil the task. Bach-Zelewski never shirked or disguised his mission of the eradication of the partisan; the partisan was his problem, as he liked to reaffirm at Nuremberg.<sup>67</sup> He was also prepared to label the fighting as political, since there was no concept of counter-insurgency at that time, ‘...it was quite clearly evident that the partisan movement was a people’s insurrection. Such people’s insurrections, of course, being unrest not only the noble motives of a nation...’<sup>68</sup>

The tactical methods that Bach-Zelewski endorsed varied with the type of opponent. When an area was declared Bandenkampfgebiet (to be cleared of partisans) Bach-Zelewski said he was only the inspector and that he could not undermine the chain of command. He suggested he was like an operations officer reviewing the situation and reporting to Himmler. The 1944, operations of his action group (Stossgruppe) at Kovel and his command position in Warsaw suggest otherwise. He could offer an alternative plan if he so desired:

Not all plans but only for large-scale operations which I [Bach-Zelewski] was responsible for planning and when more than one senior commander was involved. I always had to go through channels to get information to even the battalion commanders. After information I was the inspector. I would contact everyone including civilians, administration or military personnel. I prevented ‘wild’ actions by making the local officers responsible.<sup>69</sup>

He was asked whether the partisans were always dealt with in the same manner. His answer (a resounding ‘no’) was not just predictable, it also provided some insight

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<sup>67</sup> BZ-IMT, 24 October 1945.

<sup>68</sup> USMT, Hostage case 7, p8930.

<sup>69</sup> BZ-IMT, 26 October 1945.

into the tactical methods of the Germans and the work of the office of the Bandenkampfverbände:

The partisans, to the extent to which they were organised, were combated according to military and tactical concepts. This combating according to military regulations was a matter of the operations. Apart from those there were, however, the house partisans and the so-called wild partisans, who made use of the whole of the partisan fighting. These were small groups or individual personalities, which were active on the fringes of the area of the original partisan movement. These so-called house partisans were not combated according to military tactical aspects, but instead this combating was a matter carried out according to police and security principles.<sup>70</sup>

Such statements are not convincing. It seems hardly plausible that a junior or subordinate officer would be prepared to ignore the will of such a senior and influential SS officer. Bach-Zelewski was vainglorious in the same way as Lettow-Vorbeck, the only difference being the latter's opportunity to publish his memoirs. It was his opinion that led to the general assumptions of the size and scale of the German commitment to the campaign, 'I think we had three to four hundred thousand soldiers for the fighting of partisans.'<sup>71</sup> He may well have believed his own exaggerations but the evidence does not point to security forces of between three or four hundred thousand permanent troops committed to anti-partisan warfare.

#### Personnel problems and voices of dissent

Bach-Zelewski remained in the position of HSSPF Russland-Mitte, even when he was fully occupied with the anti-partisan problem. It was Himmler's management ethos that a substitute was temporarily assigned to these duties, providing the incumbent with 'on the job' experience. Bach-Zelewski was passed many candidates. One of those was Gerret Korsemann who was both deputy and substitute for HSSPF Russland-Mitte from October 1942 to September 1943. Prior to taking on that position he had been the district SS and police leader for Stanislav-Rostov under SS-Obergruppenführer Prützmann, the HSSPF Russland-Süd. During that time an incident had taken place where there had been a retreat from the Caucasus in which Korsemann had been blamed. However, the series of events that included Korsemann need also to be outlined.

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid

<sup>71</sup> Ibid

On the 1<sup>st</sup> June 1943, Ernst Korn requested a transfer from Korsemann's office. Korn was born in June 1899, in Freiburg im Breisgau, and lived in Mannheim. He was a Catholic who became gottgläubig in line with his SS membership. From the 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1942 to the 31<sup>st</sup> January 1943, he was chief of staff of HSSPF Russland-Mitte. In that time he had one commander, SS-Gruppenführer Carl Graf von Pückler-Burghaus. Then on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 1943, he became Bach-Zelewski's chief of staff until 27<sup>th</sup> March 1943, at the office of the plenipotentiary of Bandenbekämpfung. During those seven or eight weeks Bach-Zelewski never mentioned him in his war diary once. Korn moved on to become operations officer of the KSRFSS. He had up until this time an excellent record with career that stretched back to the First World War. He served in the 8<sup>th</sup> Jäger Battalion from May 1917 to November 1918, as a Lieutenant. He entered the Reichswehr and remained there until June 1920, including serving three months in the Freikorps Oberschlesien. Korn joined the Nazi Party on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 1933, and became a member of the SS on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 1939. He served in 213<sup>th</sup> Security Division, during the last quarter of 1941. He then became the battalion commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Polizei-Schützen Regiment from 16<sup>th</sup> December 1941 to 18<sup>th</sup> January 1942. Then on the 11<sup>th</sup> January, he was turned down from entering the Waffen-SS and the possibility to join the fighting formations. On the 17<sup>th</sup> May 1943, he was assessed by the command offices of the Orpo and found to be of good leadership quality. Then in June he requested to be transferred from Korsemann's offices; he was removed to a backwater HSSPF for virtually the rest of the war. During the Nuremberg process Korn was the only senior policeman to counter testimony made by Bach-Zelewski in the courtroom. There is little to suggest what occurred between these men.

The incident with Korsemann began when he ill-advisedly wrote a letter to General Field Marshal von Kleist on 30 June 1943, complaining to him about the rumours that someone had accused him of being a drunk.<sup>72</sup> This letter according to Himmler was wrong as far as tone and content were concerned. Bach-Zelewski, as Chef der Bandenkampfverbände, sent a report on Korsemann to Himmler on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 1943; we are unclear as to the contents. Himmler in turn sent a letter to the chief of SS personnel on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1943. He requested the details about the incidents in the Caucasus and confronted Korsemann with the letter to Kleist and the report by Bach-Zelewski.

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<sup>72</sup> TVDB, Bach-Zelewski mentions this incident in his diary for the 5<sup>th</sup> July 1943. Up to that point Bach-Zelewski appears to have made no derogatory remarks about Korsemann.

Korsemann was released from the position of HSSPF Russland-Mitte on 5 July 1943. He was accused of the following:

Too much alcohol in his life, too much fraternizing with regular German army officers, too many parties with alcohol and regular army officers, too lazy in his duties as Chief of Police, too quick to retreat from the Caucasus when trouble arose and all together he is now degraded to the Waffen-SS.<sup>73</sup>

This leads us to the most infamous case of all that also mysteriously occurred at this time. Hans Buchheim was one of the first to identify the possibility of lies, corruption, the falsification of body counts and the murder of innocent civilians in *Bandenbekämpfung*.<sup>74</sup> He identified a curious incident that involved Major General of Police Herff who had become the chief of staff at the *Bandenkampfverbände* under Bach-Zelewski:

[Letter to Maximilian von Herff, Chief of SS Personnel from Major General der Polizei Herff 9th July 1943.

You have got to know me well over a number of years and I hope you have a good opinion of me...I do not know whether I can remain here, Things are going on here which I cannot stomach...The problem connected with official reports...

In my opinion, the reports sent out from here to the Reichsführer are "cooked". Long before I arrived people in the Ukraine were saying quite openly that our casualty reports were false, People said that the figures were kept artificially low in order to highlight the "Successes". I would not wish even to hint at the reason for this. After I had been here only one day the Head of the Operations Section told me quite openly that things were going on which were not quite right. The ex-chief of Staff (who by the way had been promised my job) told me the same thing. That was on my second day here. I have told both of them that under these circumstances I cannot remain. They advise me to try and get things changed. As you know, I have done so. Yesterday a Gauleiter and general Kommissar unintentionally and unwittingly broadcast certain secret reports (intended for the Führer!) showing that some 480 rifles were found on 6,000 dead "partisans". Put bluntly, all these men had been shot to swell the figure of enemy losses and highlight our own "heroic deeds".

I am under no illusions that, this being the system the winter 1943-4 will see

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<sup>73</sup> There have been several stories of Gerrett Korsemann's behaviour, including the belief that he was court-martialled for cowardice, but, in his SS personnel file, this is not the case; as confirmed by Niels Cordes (research archivist with the National Archives).

<sup>74</sup> Hans Buchheim, *Die SS – das Herrschaftsinstrument Befehl und Gehorsam*, in *Anatomie des SS-Staates Band 1*, (München, 1967); translated in Krausnick et al (London, 1968), pp 346-347.



the beginning of the end in the rear areas and probably at the front as well. The increase in guerrilla warfare is simply and solely due to the way the Russians have been treated.

I have already on several occasions confided to you my misgivings over the "colonisation" process. If, however, we are now going to work on this system, I have no desire to see myself subsequently accused of misleading the Reichsführer-SS, with the files brought forward to prove it. The principle is that dead men there must be, no matter where they come from – otherwise the commander concerned is a bad commander and a bad soldier. What's more he won't get a decoration.

Yesterday evening I delved into this " 6,000/480 " problem I mentioned. Answer: "You appear not to know that these bandits destroy their weapons in order to play the innocent and so avoid death," How easy it must be to suppress these guerrillas - when they destroy their weapons!<sup>75</sup>

Unfortunately, Buchheim neither referred to the source nor discussed the possibility of other correspondence, or what subsequently happened to the officer in question. This time period is worth recording from Bach-Zelewski's diary. On the 29<sup>th</sup> June 1943, Bach-Zelewski had flown from an action by the 1<sup>st</sup> Police Grenadier Regiment in Zamosce, on to his home in Breslau with his pilot Wihe. Then, according to his diary, he first met his new chief of staff, Herff, in Gansenstein on the 1<sup>st</sup> July, following a flight from Breslau to Lötzen. The staff discussions continued through to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Bach-Zelewski flew on to Minsk to meet with Gerrett Korsemann, Gottberg and the SS-Brigadeführer Hermann, commander of 1<sup>st</sup> SS-Infantry Brigade, for discussions on Operation Hermann in the Naliboki Forest (there is no evidence of a play on names). On the 4<sup>th</sup> July, Bach-Zelewski was present at the meeting with the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and Himmler regarding Moslem recruits to the SS. The following day he briefed General Field Marshal von Kleist on the situation. On the 9<sup>th</sup> July not only did Herff send his letter but General von Schenckendorff died and Bach-Zelewski secured Himmler's agreement to provide the Breslau Police Band for a full military funeral.<sup>76</sup>

On the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> July 1943, Bach-Zelewski flew from Agram to Ruma in the Balkans, where he reminisced about being stationed there as a sixteen year-old war

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<sup>75</sup> Buchheim, pp346-347: The quote comes from a letter written on the 19<sup>th</sup> July 1943 from Generalmajor der Ordnungspolizei Herff to SS-Obergruppenführer von Herff, Head of the SS Personnel Department. A copy of the original can be found on NA, T175, role 38, with the subsequent correspondence.

<sup>76</sup> KDVB, pp79-80.

volunteer. Then, on the 16<sup>th</sup> July, he discussed the question of transport with General Warlimont for the large-scale operation planned for the Polotsk region. From there, he made a visit to the commanders of Operation Hermann. He then flew to Bialystok to meet with Gauleiter Sauckel to discuss labourers for the Reich. On the 19<sup>th</sup> July, he flew back to Minsk and on the following day returned to Lublin in Poland. There he met with SS-Obergruppenführer Globocnik to discuss operations regarding the Kovpak Band. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> July, he visited Prützmann to receive the details of Operation Seydlitz conducted in the area of Mosyr. In the meantime Major General Herff had written another letter to his friend Maximilian von Herff:

Dear Max,

Since yesterday I am in a completely different position. The RFSS has asked me to write to him about the situation. I told it like it has to be. I explained starkly with statistics how the situation is deteriorating. The success now is that I can request everyone to report, no matter if Bach-Zelewski is about or not. This changes the position 380 degrees. I am free again from this business of fraud.<sup>77</sup>

Matters, however, changed rapidly. Between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> July, Bach-Zelewski continued his non-stop flying, covering Rowno, Lemberg, Cracow, Breslau, Warsaw, and Lötzen. On the 27<sup>th</sup> July he discussed matters with his staff (presumably Herff) and what followed was clearly unsatisfactory to Herff. On the 28<sup>th</sup> July, Major General Herff sent yet another letter to his friend:

Dear Max,

Bach is back. He said he felt that I wanted to rule here (Ich wurde hier die Zügel der Regierung in die hand nehmen). Nothing can be further from the truth. I made this clear to him, which was an experience, that I claim as chief [of staff] a greater share of the unconditional authority. Perhaps I am wrong but I think the RFSS has confidence in me in this connection. It stems from the information that I had provided him with from 1941, which he has not forgotten. [What kind of information at this time is unknown. Herff then went off on a tangent about the troubles following the collapse of Mussolini].

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<sup>77</sup> NA, T175, role 38, Letter Generalmajor Herff to Maximilian von Herff, 21<sup>st</sup> July 1943.

In his diary on 28<sup>th</sup> July 1943, Bach-Zelewski states, 'Report to the RFSS, my chief of staff is not suitable for the position.' The next day, Major General Herff wrote the last letter that has survived:

Dear Max

Alea sund (sic) jacta [The die is cast!] These are the facts I can disappear here. They will find somebody else for this job as they did before. Their explanation was classical "too much commander and not enough chief of staff" who has to be flexible and considerate. "You want to rule yourself. The RFSS needs to have someone to shout at, but you are too old and too old to report to him everyday." I wrote to you of the real motives. When I came here two persons warned me of the situation [unknown]. I declared I would prefer to leave immediately. The older of the two told me to try it for two weeks I have done this by today. I have ordered in the absence of Bach the straight reports. They don't want to do this. The end result will not deteriorate the overall profit and loss reports.

It was openly told to me how everybody could guess the strategy. They offered me a Kampfgruppe. I initially agreed, but now wish to re-discuss, under the circumstances better that I leave, as I am so fed up. Reconsider your decision said Bach, you can lose reputation and honour, or as well achieve honour. Under these circumstances I do not wish to risk my existing honour. I will be in Berlin from the 9th August...<sup>78</sup>

As far as Bach-Zelewski was concerned the matter ended on the 13<sup>th</sup> August when Heinz Lammerding became his chief of staff.<sup>79</sup> Where does this evidence lead? Firstly, straightaway it raises doubts about the whole Bandenbekämpfung programme. This is partly to do with the continual movements of Bach-Zelewski and the question of awards, which will be discussed later. It was perhaps only Albert Speer who moved around the Reich with quite so much rapidity. Secondly, we have to conceptualise Major General Herff's problems. He was not questioning the killings per se. He was questioning their validity in terms of the Bandenkampfverbände's war record. The morality play being conducted concerned the falsification of records for important military awards. There were also Herff's questions of chief of staff authority and the interpretation Bach-Zelewski placed on the job.<sup>80</sup> As Bach-Zelewski wrote in his diary,

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<sup>78</sup> NA, T175, role 38, letter Generalmajor Herff to Maximilian von Herff, 29 July 1943.

<sup>79</sup> TVDB, p82.

<sup>80</sup> NA, T1019, roll 4, frames 0472-478, in an interrogation of Gottlob Berger on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 1946 regarding the first Herff letter. He said the problem was located in a mistake in the typographical office, but it was generally known that body counts were increased in the hope of iron crosses.

'Lectured by the RFSS. My chief of staff [Major General Herff] has been recalled, because he has not matched up to the task.'<sup>81</sup>

Herff's replacement, Heinz Lammerding, was to distinguish himself later in the war by being the commander responsible for the troops that carried out the destruction of Oradour-sur-Glane. Upon joining Bach-Zelewski's team, Charles Sydnor has said of him:

Lammerding planned and helped conduct a series of extensive "cleansing actions" in the Pripet Marshes during the summer and autumn of 1943 that claimed the lives of 15,000 Soviet partisans and resulted in the indiscriminate shooting of an undetermined number of Russian civilians.<sup>82</sup>

### Fitness for command

That is a Führer order. The Jews are the disseminators of Bolshevism. If you don't keep your nose out of the Jewish business, you'll see what'll happen to you.<sup>83</sup>

Since 1967, the widely publicised story of Bach-Zelewski's symptoms of neuroses and the claims of his doctor that he was hallucinating over the horrors of the genocide of the Jews has remained consistent amongst scholars. The general tenor of this narrative argues that Bach-Zelewski, 'Himmler's most aggressive Eastern minion', had himself become the victim of the nightmare of genocide and killing.<sup>84</sup> An image was created of the penitent Nazi overcome by genocide reaffirming the progress of human civilisation through his writhing horrors of guilt. It was a compelling argument and it included Bach-Zelewski's own confession, but as is so often the case the documentary evidence offers an alternative interpretation. The question of fitness had always been crucial for SS membership. Himmler prided himself on building a racially and physically fit elite. However, behind this image there were considerable health problems among many leading SS officers. Oswald Pohl the chief of the SS economics branch suffered from a heart condition. Gottlob Berger had been seriously wounded in the First World War and suffered from the effects. Curt von Gottberg had a leg amputated following an accident in the 1930s. Himmler himself took stress cures from his masseur Felix Kersten and of

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<sup>81</sup> TVDB, 28<sup>th</sup> July 1943.

<sup>82</sup> Sydnor, 1977, p320; his reward for his deeds was to be made commander of the SS Panzer Division, 'Das Reich'.

<sup>83</sup> Höhne, 1969, p334

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, p334.

course Kurt Daluege was relieved from his command due to the effects of syphilis. The question of Bach-Zelewski's fitness therefore requires this chapter of his life to be reopened and reevaluated, because of its potential impact upon his ability to command.

To reconstruct Bach-Zelewski's state of health it should be mentioned from the beginning that not all of the medical papers are on his SS-personnel file. The evidence therefore comes from a number of different sources. The medical conditions of Bach-Zelewski first came to prominence in a decoded signal sent to Kurt Daluege in October 1941. It stated that for fourteen days he had been suffering from kidney stones. His doctor had offered special spring water but the airborne courier had refused to carry it. As a consequence Bach-Zelewski was taking raw opium through injections and he hoped Daluege could intervene on the grounds that he could not declare himself sick.<sup>85</sup> On the 29<sup>th</sup> January 1942, Bach-Zelewski signalled the SS chief doctor (Dr.Grawitz), stating that under the orders of the RFSS he would be arriving in Berlin the next day for the operation on his intestines.<sup>86</sup> According to his war diary Bach-Zelewski was absent from duty between the 29<sup>th</sup> January and the end of April 1942.<sup>87</sup> We are unclear as to how things developed between the 29<sup>th</sup> January and the 4<sup>th</sup> March 1942.

On the 4 March 1942, Dr. Grawitz wrote to Himmler detailing Bach-Zelewski's condition.<sup>88</sup> He explained the patient had been given opium during the operation on his haemorrhoids. The post-operative conditions had led to a sound healing process but inactivity had led to a thickening of his stools. This had meant he had to be cleaned out manually, and because of the patient's sensitivity he had been given ether as an anaesthetic. Grawitz assured Himmler that the patient was on the way to recovery and that under such conditions it would take sometime before he was back to work. The crucial part of the letter was when Grawitz turned to the question of Bach-Zelewski's state of mind. He said the patient was in a serious state of exhaustion and especially nervous exhaustion brought about by his arrival directly from the eastern front. Therefore the psychological treatment of the patient was not straightforward. Höhne and others refer to the following line, 'He is suffering particularly from hallucinations

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<sup>85</sup> PRO HW 16/32:7.10.41, GPD 407, item 32, signal from Bach-Zelewski to Kurt Daluege.

<sup>86</sup> PRO HW 16/46, 29.1.42, GPD 603, item 19, signal from Bach-Zelewski to chief SS doctor.

<sup>87</sup> TVDB, p34.

<sup>88</sup> NA, T175, roll 125, letter from Dr. Grawitz to Himmler, 4<sup>th</sup> March 1942.

connected with the shootings of Jews, which he himself carried out, and with other grievous experiences in the East.’<sup>89</sup>

The psychological health of Bach-Zelewski led Dr. Grawitz to take a radical decision. He brought the patient's wife ('Mutti') to the hospital to assist in nursing him back to health. However, it seems the programme of care Bach-Zelewski had received was under investigation following a visit from Obergruppenführer Wolff. Grawitz said narcotics given to the patient in the cleaning out process had fuelled Bach-Zelewski's complaints to Wolff. He then went on to assure Himmler that the patient would soon be ready for a full convalescent leave period and then fully fit for duty. On the 6<sup>th</sup> March, Grawitz wrote again to Himmler describing Bach-Zelewski's condition of badly blocked bowels, so much so that they had to again remove his stools by hand, during an operation. On the 9<sup>th</sup> March 1942, the SS consultant wrote again to Himmler outlining some of Bach-Zelewski's medical problems. They included the symptoms associated with nervous condition that included an inferiority complex (Minderwertigkeitsvorstellungen), a high level of sensitivity to pain (Schmerzempfindlichkeit), inability to look after himself (Sichgehenlassen) and the inability to concentrate (mangelnde Willenskonzentration). The doctor gave the impression that Bach-Zelewski was suffering from a nervous condition but concluded with the telling words, '...he wants to serve his dear Reichsführer very soon.'<sup>90</sup>

The reply by Himmler, of the 18<sup>th</sup> March 1942, was scathing in its criticism not only concerning the serious medical problem for Bach-Zelewski, it also questioned the capability of the doctors.<sup>91</sup> To place this criticism in context, the SS hospital at Hohenlychen was not just regarded as one of the finest in Germany, it was where Albert Speer was sent during his period of nervous breakdown and where Kurt Dalwege was admitted for his first bout of treatment for syphilis. Himmler chose the style of an official report as his method of reply. He began by referring to the earlier correspondence from Grawitz and Wolff's visit. He pointed out that Bach-Zelewski had been placed under drugs at 10.00 am but that Wolff had visited at 6.00pm. Therefore to

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<sup>89</sup> Breitmann 1991, Hilberg 1985 and Höhne 1969. Höhne chose to embellish the evidence using later war crimes evidence from Germany, 'When the Dr. asked him why he was in such a state of fear, Bach-Zelewski growled 'Thank god, I'm through with it. Don't you know what's happening in Russia? The entire Jewish people... is being exterminated there.' (quoted from *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 25<sup>th</sup> July 1964).

<sup>90</sup> NA, SS personnel file, Bach-Zelewski, letter from chief SS doctor to Himmler, 9<sup>th</sup> March 1942.

<sup>91</sup> NA, T175, roll 125, Himmler to Grawitz, 18<sup>th</sup> March 1942, referred in the Nuremberg process P-632.

blame the complaint by Bach-Zelewski on drugs was not correct. Himmler accused Grawitz of not explaining Bach-Zelewski's problems and that he was going to 'counter objectivity with objectivity'. He pointed out that if:

(a) Von dem Bach is dependant upon certain medicines, we will have to bring him down and that will cause further difficulties and tensions.

(b) It is not possible to build trust between Dr. Köster (probably the consultant) and von dem Bach.

If you would have done this I would have intervened with my authority over Bach's behaviour in (a). In point (b) it was your duty to intervene at the right time (underlined by Himmler in the original).

I form a picture out of the case Bach of what sins you commit on our poor little man in this hospital. If the SS-Obergruppenführer is so badly treated psychologically what can the ordinary people expect.

I am convinced that the SS hospital in Berlin has not the sense of duty and quality that I expect from SS men... Because of your personal reputation I agree that von dem Bach can remain in hospital until well. In the meantime I expect advice over who will take over the running of the hospital<sup>92</sup>

Neither did Bach-Zelewski appear to be suffering from the guilt that Höhne had attributed to him. Beyond the hallucinations it begins to emerge that Bach-Zelewski's concern was in fact the personal disgust and disgrace of not being able to continue his job and his duty. This emerges from a letter of the 31st March 1942, when Bach-Zelewski wrote to Himmler about both his treatment and state of mind. He complained about the extreme stomach cramps, which had been increased by poor doctoring. Bach-Zelewski blamed the psychiatrist Professor Ueber for casting aspersions on his character. He believed his treatment was leading him to a quiet death in the straw (Strohtod) like an animal rather than the honourable death of a soldier.<sup>93</sup> There was a problem with his bowel movements but little else. He pleaded his case to Himmler as an old fighter (alter Kämpfer) with the energy and will to get back to the fight. Himmler replied that after a further four weeks rest he could rejoin his command.<sup>94</sup>

The question of his fitness to command and his first bout of illness is magnified by the side effects of drug addiction, a consequence of attempting to reduce the pain

<sup>92</sup> NA, T175, roll 125, 18<sup>th</sup> March 1942, *ibid*.

<sup>93</sup> NA, SS personnel file, Bach-Zelewski letter 31<sup>st</sup> March 1942 from Bach-Zelewski to Heinrich Himmler.

<sup>94</sup> NA, SS personnel file, Bach-Zelewski letter 6<sup>th</sup> April 1942.

brought on by the first condition. It seems that Bach-Zelewski had been exposed to drug abuse long enough to push him towards dependency. The period from September 1941 to March 1942, was long enough for Bach-Zelewski to form a level of dependency upon drugs. The residual effects of intense pain, sustained over a long period of time and the use of a hallucinatory narcotic in addition to the strain of his work might lead to behaviour aberrations. His ability to command was probably not completely undermined until he was sent on sick leave. What it meant for discipline cannot only be speculated. There is nothing to suggest he liked or disliked his work; there is evidence that he wanted to get back to his command due to what appears to be the usual explanation of frustration of inactivity.

Following his return to command he made an undated entry in his war diary, but stated as the end of April. We now understand how far Himmler would go to keep trusted subordinates in their positions irrespective of their medical fitness. He began by stating that his doctor had mistreated him as his condition had deteriorated to severe stomach cramps. Eventually his wife ('Mutti') had come to look after him:

The psychological prophecy came over me – every man has to die, easily said when one is young and healthy. When touched by death on death's bed it is a different matter. Even the most courageous soldier full of belief facing this unmerciful fact, it is easier for the religious person rather than for the believer (Gottgläubiger). The last gate through which we all have to pass remains terrifyingly unknown; in spite of the future that lies in our children. You unknown God. There are pains so cruel that weaken the body and soul. Everything seems so senseless. The good get a painful death and the bad a very easy death. The thought that innocent people and children are killed disturb me most. Now I am physically well, I have reported back for duty...

1st May: I will return to Mogilev, [whether] the disease may or not return will be decided through action. In my area of authority in central Russia the following has happened: SS-Cavalry Brigade did well in the fighting up to its decimation. Fegelein got the Knight's Cross and deserved it. It is the luck of the soldier to get such a medal.

The second bout of illness raises different questions of command fitness. Bach-Zelewski had been ordered by Hitler to form and command *Stossgruppe von dem Bach*, to guard the city of Kovel, central to the German supply network from the advancing Red Army, on the 14<sup>th</sup> January 1944.<sup>95</sup> Following an undated medical examination of

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<sup>95</sup> The military details of this action are discussed in chapter 10.



Bach-Zelewski, a letter from Dr. Ruppert, a Karlsbad specialist, was sent to another professor (probably Grawitz) on the 11<sup>th</sup> January 1944. It stated that Bach-Zelewski had been examined and they had found nothing untoward. They had used what was called a galvanising of the sphincter, referred to as the Faraday method, and that he was much better. In fact he was very active and in a good mood. The doctor said his energy made it difficult to keep him from the front.<sup>96</sup> This letter contradicts Bach-Zelewski's own diary where he admits to no illness or examination or to having had some form of treatment. Scrutinising all the days in his diary from the 1<sup>st</sup> November 1943 to 18<sup>th</sup> March 1944, there was no evidence of any medical treatment apart from his wife being sick on one day.

On the 18 March 1944, his diary referred to a signal from Himmler congratulating him on his command of the Stossgruppe in the fight against the Russians near Kovel. However, that evening he was in Karlsbad undergoing treatment again. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1944, Dr. Ruppert examined him again. The diagnosis was revealing. It seemed his old problem had returned and that he could not go to the toilet normally, causing discomfort and pain. Following a full examination the doctor said his sphincter (Schliessmuskel) was working very well and that the success of the earlier haemorrhoids operation was excellent. The advice that followed was:

The problem of SS-Obergruppenführer von dem Bach is the lack of concentration when on the toilet. He must concentrate or the sphincter cannot work. I think this failure dates back, on its own, to his nervous psychological temperament (nervous energy). The lack of hygiene in the field is partly the reason and so it gets worse. Under normal circumstances he does not appear to have any difficulties. He also believes he would be free from this under a different lifestyle. The prognosis is favourable, with regular baths, washing, diet and regular passing of stools.<sup>97</sup>

This episode seemed to be excluded from his diary. The convenience of his departure coincided with the Russian encirclement of the city. There was no suggestion on his file or in his diary that he had deliberately escaped. However, one year on, a sudden return of his old ailment and the declining fortunes of the eastern front do not favour his case.

In a postscript to the story of Bach-Zelewski's health, there was a further reference in the SS personnel file of SS-Obergruppenführer Heinz Reinefarth. On the 9<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> NA, SS personnel file, Bach-Zelewski, letter from Dr. Rapport, 11<sup>th</sup> January 1944.

<sup>97</sup> NA, SS personnel file, Bach-Zelewski, letter from Dr. Rapport, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1944.

September 1944, during the height of the Warsaw uprising Reinefarth wrote to Himmler. At the beginning of the letter Reinefarth placed the reason for success on the:

Comradely duty would not have been possible without the reckless and never ending support of SS-Obergruppenführer von dem Bach. We thought highly of Bach-Zelewski, in spite of his own suffering, stayed amongst the Kampfgruppe while gastric flu spread like a plague amongst the troops. He looked after himself only when physically forced to do so. After 12 years as an old colleague, Bach had remained in the front line providing motivation to the troops. SS-Obergruppenführer is not able to tell you about his reconnaissance flights over Warsaw, because you will prohibit his flying. I am sorry for writing this way, but I thought it was my duty because von dem Bach was owed so much in the harsh fight for Warsaw.<sup>98</sup>

This might have been a genuine letter of concern, after all Reinefarth was a holder of the Knight's Cross, received in the early days of the war. He had volunteered for the SS and had spent much of the war as a senior SS official in Posen. Prior to the Warsaw uprising there appears to have been little contact between the men. The letter was also directed toward two of Himmler's major concerns, Bach-Zelewski's risk-taking, his health and perhaps the possible loss of the last of the old SS guard who were totally trustworthy. Add to this the highly competitive environment of the SS and it seems probable that Reinefarth was either attempting to get Bach-Zelewski removed for his own interests, or he wanted to appear as a friend of Bach-Zelewski for the sake of his own interests. One final question of Bach-Zelewski's fitness to command concerned his psychological standing. Norman Dixon's work on the psychology of leaders provides some indication of how mental disorders can affect a leader; however it does not appear part of the historian's work to deduce the health of their subjects. On this matter the subject will remain open.<sup>99</sup>

### III. Summary

The security dilemma, in effect, ensures ab initio that those who serve in the ranks of the armed forces have a 'job for life', a particular status within society, and an immense potential economic, political and social influence.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> NA, SS personnel file, Heinz Reinefarth, letter to RFSS, 9 September 1944.

<sup>99</sup> Norman F. Dixon, *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence*, (London, 1976).

<sup>100</sup> Edmonds, 1988, p3.

Criticisms of Lettow-Vorbeck is certainly not new. Hew Strachen has written of his methods in less than glowing terms.<sup>101</sup> What is less well known but beginning to emerger were the connections between older colonial and later Nazi methods, which Lettow-Vorbeck initially inadvertently contributed to, but whose prescence within Nazi Germany no doubt magnified. The comparison between Bach-Zelewski, the anti-partisan commander, and Lettow-Vorbeck the partisan leader, is founded upon their respective commands. Bach-Zelewski outweighed Lettow-Vorbeck in the scale and number of forces he commanded. His style of leadership was frighteningly modern in his use of new technology, his movement across his sphere of operations and in his use of mixed ability forces. Bach-Zelewski was not a representative of a lost class as so much the harbinger of the modern counter-insurgency commander. It was Lettow-Vorbeck who represented the final throes of a lost tradition. Bach-Zelewski, by today's standards, was a sentimentalist, whose career today appears both pathetic and ludicrous. The practice of Führerprinzip was a bureaucratic sanction, which allowed Bach-Zelewski to behave as a Monday to Friday warrior, emblematic of the *Beamten mentalität* (mentality of the bureaucrat) that so dominated the ranks of the SS.<sup>102</sup> His proximity to home life might be one explanation for his willingness to continue the criminal actions of his command. His diary reflected the tenants of his leadership style – accepting orders, self-belief in his abilities and being seen to be a man of action. If he was the motivator of men that the records appear to indicate, then he was the central criminal in the crimes of genocide. However, his records also indicate a man promoted beyond his ability, the classical example of Peter's Principle and over promotion.<sup>103</sup> Bach-Zelewski projected himself as a brave soldier, but his behaviour at Kovel suggested otherwise. If Bach-Zelewski had published his memoirs, like Lettow-Vorbeck, one could only wonder which version of the events he would have finally chosen.

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<sup>101</sup> Strachen, 2001, pp360-361.

<sup>102</sup> This German phrase, *Beamten mentalität* is cynical and insulting description of a person who lives and believes in the lifestyle of the petty bureaucrat. It was symbolic of the SS concentration camp commandants, who after a full day of executions and terror, went home to their families.

<sup>103</sup> C. Northcote Parkinson, *Parkinson's Law or the Pursuit of Progress*, (London, 1957).

### **Chapter Eight: Bandenbekämpfung - The Operational Level**

There are three components of military power: the moral, which motivates soldiers and makes them fight; the physical, the way they are armed and supplied; and the conceptual... They relate to both the strategic purpose they strive to achieve and the tactics that make them up.<sup>1</sup>

The analysis of the operational level of Bandenbekämpfung as practised by the SS-police presents a conundrum for the researcher. The surviving records point toward continual large-scale operations from 1943; administered by an overwhelmingly bureaucratic process. Yet, it must be assumed that a regular and routine system of security was being maintained, if only to sustain absolute authority within the occupation zones. This raises some doubt as to whether Bandenbekämpfung, at the operational level, was the mainspring of all occupation security or if it was an adjunct to the existing security system. The Bandenbekämpfung records also point toward a simple goal orientated record keeping and analysis system. This relatively unsophisticated approach provides a possible clue as to why German operations mushroomed, rather than being rationalised. After all one of the main reasons for introducing the original directive had been to rationalise security. The SS, it seems, maintained their war of attrition struggle against the partisans, rather than a more selective and sophisticated campaign. Although with Hitler's frustration toward the seemingly insolvable partisan problem, it seems probable that the SS had little choice but to escalate their operations. The Foreign Military Studies and post war testimonies, which in turn became the basis of most of the literature on the anti-partisan warfare, never clarified these questions. This is partly attributable to the general misunderstanding of German operational concepts and more specifically Bandenbekämpfung.

Christopher Bellamy, in defining 'operational concepts', referred to the classical German models of the Schlieffen Plan and 'Blitzkrieg' as a means of clarification. Approaching Bandenbekämpfung through Bellamy's model, we can identify some crucial points. Firstly, Hitler as national leader had defined the purpose of Bandenbekämpfung. In its simplest terms the strategic mission had two central objectives, with general guidelines. Through Heinrich Himmler it formulated a distinctive doctrine and bureaucracy. To complete this analysis we need to now

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher Bellamy, 'Operational Concepts', in Holmes, 2001, pp673-676.

understand how this doctrine was transformed into practice. This chapter will examine the operational methodology of Bandenbekämpfung in so doing it will identify its peculiar pseudo-military-police-bureaucratic character. In coming to these findings there will be a brief reflection of how Bandenbekämpfung has been perceived since 1945. However, it will be seen through the examination of Bach-Zelewski's changing status from Bevollmächtigter des Reichsführer SS für Bandenbekämpfung to Chef der Bandenkampfverbände; that SS policy was taking a more complex course. This will be followed by an analysis of the planning for operations, the formation of the Kampfgruppe (battle group) and the operation. An example of an operation will be then used to complete that part of the chapter. This will then be followed with an analysis of German losses and examples of post combat evaluation reports.

## **I. The Existing Interpretations**

In August 1942 OKH transferred the job of Rear Area Security from the Quartermaster-General to the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations. This decision reflected an acknowledgement that anti-partisan operations had reached a new level of importance in relation to operations at the front, and that success or failure of either one would affect the other. Hitler sanctioned the OKH policy with Führer Directive No. 46 on anti-partisan warfare. The war against partisan bands was henceforth to be considered a part of general operations. The new aggressive spirit of pursuing the partisans wherever they might be was psychologically accented by an order prohibiting the use of the term "partisan", which had the connotation of freedom fighter, and substituting for it the term "bandit".<sup>2</sup>

The question of German strategy and operations has been a central debate since the end of the Second World War, with both historians and soldiers' alike taking a keen interest in how the Germans performed through both world wars. The leading figures usually identified as the masters of strategy included von Schlieffen, von Moltke (the elder), Guderian and even on occasion Hitler himself. These men have been identified as the exponents of various strategies including the Vernichtungskrieg (war of destruction), the Schlieffen Plan and Blitzkrieg.<sup>3</sup> Michael Geyer has questioned the general thesis of

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<sup>2</sup> Simpson, 1976, p43.

<sup>3</sup> The awe of the German General Staff and the German strategic expertise has receded in recent years. For example Basil Liddell-Hart was positively inspired when he concluded, *The Other Side of the Hill*, (London, 1951) on page 471 with the following, 'The German generals of this war were the best finished product of their profession-anywhere.' However, Manfred Messerschmidt, 'Vorwärtsverteidigung: Die "Denkschrift der Generäle" für den Nürnberger Gerichtshof', in Heer and Naumann (Hg), pp531-551, pointed to the conspiratorial practices of five leading German generals, who during the Nuremberg

German strategic expertise, suggesting that after 1914 this was in effect an operational paradigm.<sup>4</sup> Geyer's argument contends that the Germans separated strategy and doctrine, and then strategy from operations, concluding that by 1942, the emphasis was operational. He places considerable blame for this state of affairs upon Hindenburg and in particular Ludendorff, who Geyer personified as the epitome of the zealous warrior.

These grand strategic concepts have tended to stifle research into other less glamorous avenues. Nevertheless, venturing into these other avenues immediately raises questions about the existing theories of German strategic thinking. Taking up the issue of security, we are immediately faced with the stark choice of having to work with unsustainable theories or contending with the possibility that the Germans regarded national security as an altogether different strategic problem. If this were the case then we would also have to accept the military's cavalier attitude toward war winning strategies was not matched in their practise of national security. Even Geyer is opened up to criticism.<sup>5</sup> He argued that the German strategy in the latter part of the First World War was attrition warfare; an attempt to force the opponent's elites to sue for peace or be threatened with the loss of power and status. This led to an escalation to apocalyptic war, according to Geyer, which by the time of the Second World War, ended in apocalypse: He then went on to rationalise Nazi strategy as a series of gambles, stating that Hitler's early war opportunism infected the process of strategy:

The course of German strategy during the Third Reich was not determined by a set of rationally formulated grand objectives. Instead it was shaped by a series of gambles – gambles on the army's ability to obtain adequate support from the country's limited economic base, which was made more difficult by the regime's unwillingness to compromise its goal of domestic pacification and purification, and on the government's ability to allay concern over its growing domination of Europe and to prevent the formation of effective anti-German alliances.<sup>6</sup>

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tribunal drafted a collective document in an attempt to disguise the crimes of the Wehrmacht.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Geyer, 'German strategy in the Age of Machine Warfare, 1914-1945', in Peter Paret (ed), *Makers of Modern Strategy: from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, (Princeton, 1986), pp527-597. Geyer also continues his line of thought through 'Restorative elites, German society and the Nazi pursuit of war', in Richard Bessel (ed), *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: comparisons and contrasts*, (Cambridge, 1996), pp134-164.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, in Paret, p532, especially in his statement that Schlieffen was only interested in European land based war. Yet know from chapter one that von Trotha was under instructions from von Schlieffen, who probably planned the pacification of the Herero uprising.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p575

This cannot be correct. The German strategic ethos was founded upon a high level of pre-planning, as seen in chapter four, and in this case, directed toward the national-political-ideological goal of Lebensraum. Geyer has expounded this view that the Nazis were chaotic, overtly operational with little thought for the strategic situation. Again the empirical evidence does not support that contention.

Coming to the operational element of Bandenbekämpfung we face fewer problems. Keith Simpson identified the German hierarchy of operational measures, drawing upon the army directive of October 1941, itemising five levels of operation:

1. Pacification operations – troop detachments occupying all localities of specific areas – an effective but time-consuming method, usually beyond the capability of the army.
2. Large-scale operations (Grossunternehmungen) - by special task forces up to division strength, similar to the ones undertaken in the Dnepr Bend-effective only if enough troops could be assigned to close a tight ring round a large partisan group.
3. Small-scale operations (Kleinunternehmungen) - by forces up to company strength, usually effective only if surprise could be achieved in attacking a specific objective such as an armed camp.
4. Mopping-up operations - a device to be used after a partisan unit had been broken up, to clear an area or a line of communication.
5. Strongpoints - a defensive concept employed to protect localities containing troops, headquarters, or depots, chiefly along main supply routes.<sup>7</sup>

There was much to credit this aspect of Simpson's paper because he began to examine German security methods from an objective standpoint. For the rest of this chapter we will mainly focus upon the first three points and how they were organised from the operational level. The latter two points will be approached through the study of a security battalion where it will be noted that behind these measures lay the everyday routine of policing which formed a major part of SS-Police duties.

## **II. From the Strategic to the Operational**

Whereas irregular or guerrilla warfare prior to the Second World War

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<sup>7</sup> Simpson, p43, or IMT, NOKW 151, OKH Richtlinien für die Partisanenbekämpfung (Guidelines for Combating Partisans), 25<sup>th</sup> October 1941.

represented primarily a tactical method, modern insurgency has implied a politico-military campaign waged by guerrillas with the object of overthrowing the government of a state. In essence, political, social, economic and psychological elements have been added to irregular military tactics with revolutionary intent.<sup>8</sup>

Between 1942 and 1943, Bach-Zelewski's position vis-à-vis Bandenbekämpfung changed twice. In October 1942, Bach-Zelewski was removed from his position of HSSPF Russland-Mitte to become Bevollmächtigter des Reichsführer SS für Bandenbekämpfung (in effect Himmler's inspector of anti-partisan operations).<sup>9</sup> This was a liaison role between the doctrinaire and the men in the field. He was also crucial in forming agreements between the Wehrmacht and SS over such matters as spheres of influence and setting common boundaries between forces. In this role he kept a record, like an inspector, monitoring and reporting the performance of the men and the operations. He knew that to eventually take full command of the Bandenkampfverbände, which was probably Himmler's intentions anyway, there had to be proof of his ability. We know from Bach-Zelewski's limited schooling and his military skills that the information he provided was rudimentary and just the raw data from the operations.

The list (table 32) of operations taken from Bach-Zelewski's diary and raises a number of issues. Firstly, there was no evidence on his part of making any statistical implications to Himmler. The diary does not offer any clues of Bach-Zelewski balancing the results gleaned from operations with any correction in policy or methods. If we compare these results with Meldung 51a, illustrated in chapter four, we can begin to make new assumptions about Himmler's operational methods. Firstly, the results as presented to Hitler were raw data, lists of killings, plunder and destruction. It is now widely accepted that Hitler preferred this style from where he could recall large numbers in his discussions and arguments. On the other hand we also know that Himmler had studied agricultural management at university level. That he also employed leading scientists and statisticians to work on racial programmes. Himmler also issued a pro forma for the reporting of enemy losses and casualties following an

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<sup>8</sup> Ian F.W. Beckett and John Pimlott, *Armed Forces and Modern Counter-Insurgency*, (London, 1985), p1.

<sup>9</sup> KVDB, p51.



operation.<sup>10</sup> This standardisation of the collection of data without the evidence of subsequent statistical inference does appear strange. These findings suggest two possible conclusions; firstly, there was no analysis to the collection of the data. Secondly, that Himmler had introduced a time and motion methodology directed toward attrition-based operations.<sup>11</sup> It appears perplexing that there were apparently no performance ratios, measurements or tests. Presented in tabular form they might have looked like this after they had been passed on to Himmler:

**Table 32: Operations inspected under Bevollmächtigter für Bandenbekämpfung<sup>12</sup>**

FORMATION OR OPERATION		GERMAN			PARTISAN			
	Diary Date	Dead	Missing	Wounded	Dead	Shot	POWs	Labour
'Karlsbad'	26. 10.1942	27	-	64	546	-	33	-
201 <sup>st</sup> Schuma Battalion	30.10.1942	26	-	-	89	-	20	-
54 <sup>th</sup> Schuma Battalion	30.10.1942	3	-	-	-	-	5	-
14 <sup>th</sup> Police Regiment	30.10.1942	nil	-	3	5	-	-	-
1 <sup>st</sup> SS Infantry Brigade	2.11.1942	4	1	3	11	-	?	-
FK - Minsk	3.11.1942	156	1	62	1,003	480	-	-
Small unnamed	3. 11. 1942	3	-	1	22	-	-	-
'Schnell' - Rowanitschi	10. 11.1942	19	-	7	136	-	-	-
Dirlewanger - 'Albert II'	12. 11.1942	3	7	5	176	-	-	-
14 <sup>th</sup> Police - 'Albert II'	12.11.1942	-	-	-	30	-	-	-
'Albert II'	13.11.1942	-	-	-	127	-	10	-
20 <sup>th</sup> Panzer Division	13.11.1942	-	-	-	57	-	-	-
'München'	18. 11.1942	1		3	42	-	3	-
'München'	20. 11.1942	Nil	Nil	Nil	63	-	-	-
'Nürnberg'	24. 11.1942	1	-	1	?	?	?	-
'Nürnberg'	27. 11.1942	-	-	-	524	-	30	-
Minsk area	28.11. 1942	6	?	?		353	-	-
3 <sup>rd</sup> Schuma Battalion	15. 1.1943	-	-	21	147	-	-	-
'Franz'	16. 1. 1943	?	1	14		1,143	-	-
13 <sup>th</sup> Police Regiment	29.1. 1943	6	-	17	3+	-	-	1,308
'Hornung'	16.2.1943	?	-	7	?	-	104	-
14 <sup>th</sup> Police Regiment	23. 2. 1943	-	-	2	463	-	-	1,834
Polish Schuma	23.2.1943	3	-	-	20	-	-	-
'Hornung'	3. 3. 1943	?	-	10		2,074	56	-
'Fohn'	23.3. 1943	-	-	-	543	-	-	-
Totals		413	10	156	4,007	4,050	261	3,142

The existence of this data raises further questions. During the Boer War, Lord Kitchener had focused his methods to containing the Boer guerrillas and expose them to the maximum firepower of his security forces. Kitchener also ensured that they

<sup>10</sup> NA, T354, roll 648, pro forma reporting 1943.

<sup>11</sup> F.W.Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management*, (London, 1911). Taylorism was a theory that expounded the idea of incentives. It was almost certainly raised in the technical universities in Germany. A correlation between Bandenbekämpfung and incentives can be found in the distribution of military and political awards. This management technique was a means to increasing performance from limited human resources and a simple instrument for imposing comparisons between different units. This technique saw the achievement of results through standard routines, simplified tasks and maximum use of resources. In management terms it also defined lines of authority and spheres of control. To maximise its limited resources the adoption of Taylorism suited the SS management culture; relying as it did upon belief in leadership and will.

<sup>12</sup> KVDB, pp55-95.

remained on the move never allowing the Boers to settle or replenish in one place. In Namibia, von Trotha had been ordered to remove the Herero from their own native lands depriving them of any support. The Germans in Russia, however, were unresolved over their operational intentions of absolute authority and reluctantly accepting partisan control in highly inaccessible and unproductive wastelands. Himmler's doctrine recognised this indecision. By way of an answer Himmler believed that by inflicting attrition on the partisan forces, would force 'Bolshevism' to disintegrate; in some respects believing he could cause the collapse of the Soviet Union, as occurred in Imperial Russia in 1917. This of course further supports the opinion discussed in chapter four, that Himmler believed that Bandenbekämpfung was the ultimate political battle between Communism and National Socialism. The thrust of his methods lay in the reliance upon numerical evidence and his interpretation of the data. It is probable that these analyses were the application of some form of 'time and motion' work-study.<sup>13</sup>

When we move on to take into account Bach-Zelewski's diary following his promotion it is noticeable that there is a significant change in his style of record keeping. The number of detailed reported operations had reduced to just three; again, in tabular, form they look like this:

**Table 33: Bach-Zelewski's command record<sup>14</sup>**

formation and organisation		German			Partisan			
	Diary Date	Dead	Missing	Wounded	Dead	Shot	POWs	Labour
'Fritz'	8. 10.1943	20	-	63	668	410		15,730
'Heinrich'	20.11.1943	389	72	1,535	5,146	46	136	
Warsaw Uprising	5.10.1944	1,526	-	8,196	100,000?		22,443	309,716
	Total	1,935	72	9,794	105,814	456	22,579	325,446
From above table	Total	413	10	156	4,007	4,050	261	3,142

This list (Table 33) indicates not only a sea change in the command of Bandenbekämpfung but also how the Germans had entered the next stage in the escalation of the attrition process. The numbers of larger operations replaced the smaller actions, with the results dominated by the Warsaw Uprising, which will be discussed in more detail, but was at the time purposefully intended to represent a numerical appearance akin to Stalingrad in its proportions.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Taylor, *ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> KVDB, pp72-117.

<sup>15</sup> In chapter ten it will be explained how the SS leaders in the Warsaw (1944) operations compared their victory to a reversal (or revenge) of Stalingrad.

We also note that the meeting and conference schedule, from Chapter six, and Bach-Zelewski's flights between sectors suggest the confirmation of his strategic role. Between June 1943 and December 1944, Bach-Zewlewski, unlike any other senior commander, was probably more aware of the condition of the war from the German perspective. On the 20<sup>th</sup> February 1943, Bach-Zelewski met with General Wagner of the OKW. The theme of the meeting was the 'Clarification of the operational powers in Weissruthenien for the purposes of a more effective Bandenbekämpfung.' Bach-Zelewski suggested the corruption and anarchy in the civil administration was the central cause of the problem and bringing back 'normality' to civilian life would make security easier. This appears to have been the beginning of the events that led to Bach-Zelewski becoming Chef der Bandenkampfverbände in June 1943. If his diary can be believed, he suggested on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1943, that the Bandenbekämpfung methods were benefiting the 'Bolsheviks'.

The demand for labour was also still on the Bandenkampfverbände's agenda and pacification operations were directed toward the capture of labourers. In May 1943 there were yet still further incursions in the Pripet Marshes as the Germans tried to destroy partisan forces, many of whom were escaped Jews. The month of June opened with meetings between Bach-Zelewski, Odilo Globocnik and Krüger over the problems in Poland. While there he met with Fromm the SSPF of Bialystok (the support base for the Bandenkampfverbände). Later in the month the structures changed as we saw earlier. With the change in Bach-Zelewski's position, the content of his diary became more strategic in its entries. His travel plans were now facilitated by supply of a Junkers 52 from Hermann Göring (referred to in chapter 6). In July there were significant changes in senior officers. It was a sad month for Bach-Zelewski, when Max von Schenckendorff died whom he described as a 'fatherly' figure. The funeral did not interrupt the agenda of work; on the 18<sup>th</sup> July he had another meeting with Sauckel over the question of the need for more labour in the Reich. Near to the end of the month he visited Krüger (HSSPF General-Government) to study the operations against the Soviet Kovpak band.

During this month he visited Berlin to have discussions with Schellenberg, which was presumably about Operation Zeppelin and intelligence matters. On the 15<sup>th</sup> August 1943, Bach-Zelewski presented Walter Schimana with the German Cross in Gold for his

achievements in the Pripet Marshes. Schimana, who was held in high esteem by Bach-Zelewski,<sup>16</sup> in October 1943, became HSSPF of Greece replacing Stroop who had failed.<sup>17</sup> From September to October, Bach-Zelewski was involved in meetings with new liaison officers. These were in the main with the Luftwaffe, as a series of high level meetings took place in Göring's ministry. The first meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> September involved the unlikely combination of SD Obergruppenführer Artur Nebe, who had commanded Einsatzgruppen operations in Bach-Zelewski's territory from June 1941, and Major General Dahlem one of Göring's senior staff officers. The outcome was that on the 13<sup>th</sup> October 1943, he was given Colonel Dr. Bormann, a Knights Cross recipient, as his Luftwaffe attaché. For the operations in the Idritza area of Russia he was passed Oberst von Mellenthin on the 31<sup>st</sup> October. On the 17<sup>th</sup> October, Bach-Zelewski met with Lieutenant General von Rothkirch who was the replacement for von Schenckendorff. In December 1943, he was invited to parties amongst his troops, including in Croatia, but on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 1943, he attended a function of Himmler's Freundeskreis. This was the so-called circle of friends of leading businessmen and economists. On the 14<sup>th</sup> January, he was ordered by Himmler to form Stossgruppe von dem Bach and defend the towns along the railway line Brest-Kovel-Luzk-Rovno from the main Soviet offensive in the Ukraine. These operations kept him involved until May 1944. The line was finally stabilised at Kovel with a strong counter-attack by German forces. In May 1944, Bach-Zelewski visited Bandenbekämpfung operations in Yugoslavia and in the east of Poland.

### III. The Kampfgruppe - HSSPF Power-Projection

In chapter six, the structure of the SS security system and Bandenbekämpfung was explained. Under the order of the 7 September 1943, each HSSPF formed a Kampfgruppe (battle group). The Kampfgruppe was to draw upon the available forces under the command of each HSSPF. These formations were not uniform in size or organisation. A balance was struck between routine security (social control) and counter-insurgency operations (partisan eradication). In this they were intended to reflect the local conditions. The outcome, in terms of manpower, would have led to a troop range of between 10,000 up to 35,000.

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<sup>16</sup> BZ-IMT, 25<sup>th</sup> March 1946.

<sup>17</sup> Mark Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece: the experience of occupation 1941-44*, (Yale, 1995).

Prützmann and Krüger's Kampfgruppen

These two Kampfgruppen in one sense confirm earlier research and on the other raise further questions. One of the largest was that of Kampfgruppe Prützmann. This table confirms Leonie Wheeler's findings that the gendarmerie was highly regarded for police duties. Prützmann's forces covered a vast area of Southern Russia and the Ukraine. The signals companies would have been crucial in ensuring the co-ordination of operations. We notice that two Landeschützen battalions are included in the order of battle; their role remains unclear at this stage.

**Table 34: Prützmann's Kampfgruppe<sup>18</sup>**

SS-Police Regiments	Central Kampfgruppe Units	Gendarmerie
Police Regiment 'Gieseke'	268 <sup>th</sup> Landeschütz Police Batl.	16 Gendarmerie Troop (motorised)
37 <sup>th</sup> Police Defence Regiment	Police Landeschütz Batl. 'Jehne'	15 Gendarmerie Troop (motorised)
35 <sup>th</sup> Police Defence Regiment		55 Gendarmerie Troop (motorised)
33 <sup>rd</sup> Police Defence Regiment		3 Gendarmerie Troop (motorised)
10 <sup>th</sup> Police Regiment	81 <sup>st</sup> Police Signals Company	41 Gendarmerie Troop (motorised)
4 <sup>th</sup> SS-Police Regiment	83 <sup>rd</sup> Police Signals Company	51 Gendarmerie Troop (motorised)
11 <sup>th</sup> SS-Police Regiment	121 <sup>st</sup> Police Signals Company	5 Gendarmerie Troop (motorised)
22 <sup>nd</sup> SS-Police Regiment		61 Gendarmerie Troop (motorised)
	Police Cavalry Detachment I	60 Gendarmerie Troop (motorised)
Tank-hunting company	Police Cavalry Detachment II	1 Gendarmerie Troop (motorised)
(4 <sup>th</sup> SS Police Regiment)		4 Gendarmerie Troop (motorised)
Heavy company		57 Gendarmerie Troop (motorised)
(11 <sup>th</sup> SS Police Regiment)		45 Gendarmerie Troop (motorised)

Friedrich-Wilhelm Krüger's Kampfgruppe, for HSSPF General-government was different from that of Prützmann's in several important respects. The obvious differences are the two training battalions, which possibly suggest Poland had been designated an Ausbildung area for the SS-police establishment. Another difference lies in the number of named police battalions (probably after the commander). We have as yet no understanding of how they were formed or what their duties were. This list does not include any Gendarmerie units and the Deutsche Dienststelle had no other records for Poland.

**Table 35: Friedrich-Wilhelm Krüger's Kampfgruppe<sup>19</sup>**

SS-Police Regiments	Commander Named Police Battalions	Police Battalions
2 <sup>nd</sup> SS Police Regiment	Police Battalion Gaarsche	1, 2, 3, 4
14 <sup>th</sup> SS Police Regiment	Police Battalion Gaier	41, 42, 61, 62, 63,
15 <sup>th</sup> SS Police Regiment	Police Battalion Krüger	71, 81, 91, 92
	Police Einsatz Battalion Kunhardt	101, 102, 103, 171

<sup>18</sup> DDSt, record cards of the Kampfgruppe Prützmann 1942-1944.

<sup>19</sup> DDSt, record cards of the Kampfgruppe Krüger.

Police Artillery Battalion	Police Bicyclist Battalion Nord	
	Police Battalion Schirmeck	
Police Training Battalion Warsaw	Police Battalion Südost	
Police Training Battalion West Prussia	Police Battalion Tietz	
	Police Battalion West	
	Police Battalion Wittmann	

### Kampfgruppe Gottberg and Operation Cottbus

Curt von Gottberg was proof that corruption and deviousness did not prevent an effective SS man from rising to the top.<sup>20</sup> The cases of Gottberg's corruption, arrogance and self-serving behaviour were numerous are however set-aside for one moment, there is another side to this man. Two of his seven children died and at various times he made impetuous decisions to move to places where there was both work and medical support. Following a series of scandals during his time in Czechoslovakia, a letter from the main board of Junkers (the aircraft manufacturer) was sent on the 7 March 1940 to Heinrich Himmler requesting the release of Gottberg to a position within the company. Under the rules of SS membership he could only be released by the Reichsführer-SS. He was to be paid 1,000.00 Reichsmarks per month to instruct on leadership. It is quite possible that it was a ploy to raise Gottberg's status in the mind of Himmler. If that was the case then it had worked because Gottberg was soon invited to join several SS economic based projects. Following more intrigues and troubles von Gottberg became Bach-Zelewski's substitute as HSSPF Russland-Mitte in the latter half of 1942.

**Table 36: Kampfgruppe Gottberg during Operation Cottbus (1943)<sup>21</sup>**

	PLACE/COTTBUS	FINAL AUTHORITY	MANPOWER
HSSPF Russland-Mitte	Minsk	HSSPF	
Staff company	Minsk	HSSPF	193
Stabsfahrbereitschaft	Minsk	HSSPF	79
Signals company 112	Minsk	HSSPF	78
Supply officer	Minsk	HSSPF	190
NSKK Company Nuremberg	Minsk	HSSPF	
Volunteer Transport Company	Minsk	HSSPF	
Volunteer work company.	Minsk	HSSPF	
Command of SS-Obstbnf. Magill	Minsk	HSSPF	8
SS-Police Court 17	Minsk	SS Court Munich	11
3rd Air Liaison Officer	Minsk	Luftwaffe	44

The headquarters function of the HSSPF Russland-Mitte included three regional sectors one of which was known as SSPF-Weissruthenia (SS and Police Leader White

<sup>20</sup> Refer to Appendix 3, Dramatis Personae

<sup>21</sup> NA, T1354, roll 650, *ibid*.

Russia). In the following table we can see the scale of these forces deployed for Operation Cottbus, which took place between April and June 1943. The Luftwaffe liaison officer was there to help provide radio interception support and if necessary bring in air cover (probably bombers from Bobruisk). The three HSSPF in Russia each had a dedicated staff or leadership office. In tables 37-39 we can see the extent of this organisation. The organisations affiliated to it such as the Luftwaffe liaison officer, played a crucial role, providing both signals interceptions of the partisans and air cover. As with most German occupation structures since the Franco-Prussian war there was also a judicial component, the SS Court 17 (with authority from Munich). As Kampfgruppe commander and HSSPF, Gottberg's powers were massively increased to that of a corps commander. His authority within his district was absolute. The number of forces he could deploy was left to his own discretion.

**Table 37: The SS-Police formations during Operation Cottbus (1943)**

SSPF WEISSRUTHENIA	LOCATION	AUTHORITY	MEN
SSPF	Minsk	HSSPF	13
2 <sup>nd</sup> SS Police Regiment	<b>Cottbus</b>	HSSPF	2,310
31 <sup>st</sup> Police Defence Regiment	<b>Cottbus</b>	HSSPF	1,500
12 <sup>th</sup> Police Armoured Company	<b>Cottbus</b>	HSSPF	131
SS Special Battalion Dirlewanger	<b>Cottbus</b>	HSSPF	550
Schuma Training Battalion	Uretsche	HSSPF	132
Command of the Security Police and SD	Minsk	RSHA	865
Staff of the farmers associations	Minsk	Kdr. d. Orpo. WR	2053
Staff of the Gendarmerie Einsatzcommando	Minsk	SSPF WR	442
Commander of the Orpo Weissruthenia	Minsk	Kdo.d.Orpo. WR	107
Staff company	Minsk	Kdo.d.Orpo. WR	150
11 <sup>th</sup> Signals company	Minsk	Kdo.d.Orpo. WR	63
Volunteer Music corps Leipzig	Minsk	Kdo.d.Orpo. WR	45
Commander of the Schuma Minsk	Minsk	Kdo.d.Orpo. WR	467
Detachment of the department of Schutzpolizei.	Baranowitsche	Kdo.d.Orpo. WR	192
SS Carrier Pigeon Station X	Baranowitsche	Kdo.d.Orpo. WR	2
Fire Brigade Schuma	Minsk	Kdo.d.Orpo. WR	152
Fire Brigade Schuma	Baranowitsche	Kdo.d.Orpo. WR	66

The Gendarmerie has received very little attention within the existing historiography. Tessin and others have maintained that they were a small force that usually operated with one officer and up to 36 men and that many of these small units were motorised.<sup>22</sup> Leonnie Wheeler, referred to in chapter three, identified the confidence the SS and in particular Daluge had in these units. The Gendarmerie remained important to SS security operations across the occupied territories. As will be noticed from the following table 38 six motorised Gendarmerie units were deployed for Cottbus. Contrary to the sweeping generalisations held against these men as

<sup>22</sup> Tessin et al, 2000, pp575-576.

collaborators and poor performers, the Germans accepted the importance of these units. They were the largest armed force under SS-Police control. These formations were also supplied with some heavy weapons.

**Table 38: Gendarmerie formations during Operation Cottbus (1943)**

COMMANDER OF GENDARMERIE	LOCATION	AUTHORITY	
Headquarters	Minsk		42
Gendarmerie Minsk Schuma Patrols	Minsk	Commander of Gendarmerie	252
Gendarmerie Baranowitsche Schuma Patrols	Baranowitsche	Commander of Gendarmerie	265
Gendarmerie Wileika Schuma Patrols	Wileika	Commander of Gendarmerie	158
6 <sup>th</sup> Gendarmerie Troop (motorised)	<b>Cottbus</b>	Gendarmerie Minsk	36
7 <sup>th</sup> Gendarmerie Troop (motorised)	Baranowitsche	Gendarmerie Baranowitsche	36
11 <sup>th</sup> Gendarmerie Troop (motorised)	<b>Cottbus</b>	Gendarmerie Minsk	37
12 <sup>th</sup> Gendarmerie Troop (motorised)	<b>Cottbus</b>	Gendarmerie Wileika	39
13 <sup>th</sup> Gendarmerie Troop (motorised)	Lida	Gendarmerie Baranowitsche	41
19 <sup>th</sup> Gendarmerie Troop (motorised)	<b>Cottbus</b>	Gendarmerie Baranowitsche	35
21 <sup>st</sup> Gendarmerie Troop (motorised)	<b>Cottbus</b>	Gendarmerie Minsk	36
SS-V-Manner Drushina	<b>Cottbus</b>	SD	2,500
SS Hospital Minsk	Minsk	SS Leadership Group D	64
Police Supply Depot.	Baranowitsche	Gendarmerie Minsk	-
Police Supply (Russia Centre)	Baranowitsche	Gendarmerie Minsk	-
Police riding and driving school	Postawy	Police Commander Ostland	-
SS Main Command Zeppelin	Glebokie	RSHA	

**Table 39: The Schuma Battalions during Operation Cottbus (1943)**

SCHUMA BATTALIONS	LOCATED	AUTHORITY	MEN
3 <sup>rd</sup> Lithuanian Battalion	Baranowitsche	Kdo.d.Orpo. WR	380
12 <sup>th</sup> Lithuanian Battalion	Hansewitsche	Kdo.d.Orpo. WR	325
15 <sup>th</sup> Lithuanian Battalion	<b>Cottbus</b>	Kdo.d.Orpo. WR	603
254 <sup>th</sup> Reserve Lithuanian Battalion	Saarkowszczyana	Kdo.d.Orpo. WR	158
271 <sup>st</sup> Lithuanian Battalion	Uretschje	Kdo.d.Orpo. WR	350
46 <sup>th</sup> Byelorussia Battalion	Nowogrodek	Kdo.d.Orpo. WR	???
47 <sup>th</sup> Byelorussia Battalion	Minsk	Kdo.d.Orpo. WR	630
51 <sup>st</sup> Byelorussia Battalion	Wolotschin	Kdo.d.Orpo. WR	???
54 <sup>th</sup> Ukrainian Battalion	<b>Cottbus</b>	Kdo.d.Orpo. WR	???
102 <sup>nd</sup> Ukrainian Battalion	<b>Cottbus</b>	Kdo.d.Orpo. WR	413
115 <sup>th</sup> Ukrainian Battalion	Slonim	Kdo.d.Orpo. WR	537
118 <sup>th</sup> Ukrainian Battalion	<b>Cottbus</b>	Kdo.d.Orpo. WR	397
57 <sup>th</sup> Ukrainian Battalion	<b>Cottbus</b>	Kdo.d.Orpo. WR	444
56 <sup>th</sup> Artillery Battalion	Borissow	Kdo.d.Orpo. WR	413
49 <sup>th</sup> Byelorussia Battalion	Minsk	Kdo. Sch.Minsk	315

The proportion of forces drawn at the stage of the operation was 9,495, of which the SS-Police force represented 47% of the total kampfguppe. The Schuma battalions



were 24% of the total forces. The SS-V-Männer Druschina (table 38) was a force of renegade Russians that later turned against the Germans. They represented 26% of the Kampfgruppe. On paper this presented a picture of a ratio of 1:1 between Germans and foreign troops, at that stage of the operation. Those forces not assigned for the operation represent another situation. The largest section of heavily armed troops was the Schuma Battalions of 3,632 men and the Gendarmerie of 753 men. The SS-Police were a combination of headquarters units, support troops and specialist formations of 4,324 men. This left 8,709 men to police the remaining sector. These figures do not represent the large numbers of security forces often believed to be assigned to conducting operations at the height of the partisan campaign of 1943.

#### **IV. Forgotten Victims: The case of the Bandenkinder**

The following episode was found among the RFSS papers in the National Archives represents another interpretation of Bandenbekämpfung's results. The actions of the Bandenbekämpfung had led to the large-scale the destruction of families was leaving behind many orphaned children. In the east the army had already had to contend with gangs of orphaned children. Thus a three-way paper trail was developed between Bach-Zelewski, Ernst Kaltenbrunner of the RSHA and Himmler himself over the management of these children. It began with an order transmitted from Himmler's offices:

Memo 23rd July 1943: I include a copy of the letter of the RFSS 10th July 1943, he wants to place part of the female population and all orphaned children in the Auffangslager (detention centre). They are to be employed on the cultivation and the harvest of Kok-Sagys [German spelling] on the state farms in the Ukraine.

Instructions came from Himmler on the 28 July 1943, concerning the basic treatment of the bandit children, with supplemental copy of the order from the RFSS of the 10<sup>th</sup> July 1943:

The RFSS asks to transmit this order to the responsible places. The RFSS has to point out again, that the children now have to be dealt with. There has not been any reply to the order of 19th July 1943, the order is renewed by RFSS of 10th July 1943. The following instructions apply:

1. The RFSS has agreed that Russian activists operating in the Warthegau does not affect the intention to erect buildings for the education of bandit children.

2. An erection of buildings for the accommodation of bandit children in the General-government is based on the order to use the children on the state farms in the Ukraine by the RFSS. Following the letter of the 26th July 1943 the RFSS has agreed that the accommodation of the bandit children in the Ukraine in buildings set up there. These children will also be employed on the state farms.

3. The RFSS approves of the sectioning off of the Russian children from the Latvian children's home and the Russian families. These children shall also be employed on the state farms.

4. The wishes of Prützmann have already been agreed by the direct order of the RFSS [unknown wishes].

5. With regard to the age of the bandit children to be accommodated in buildings the instruction already given by the RFSS is clear. The RFSS has agreed to the collection of all children under 15 years of age.

6. The question of the accommodation of the children is not only an SD responsibility.<sup>23</sup>

Then communications were established between Bach-Zelewski and Kaltenbrunner, telex 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1943, from Dr. Kaltenbrunner:

The erection of refugee camps for bandit women and children has been agreed with HSSPF Erich von dem Bach. The HSSPF has been asked, to set up the stores and carry out the collection of bandit women and children. Accelerate this for children. Collecting them on the state farms has not happened; Konstanty now has been set up as an SD centre so the process can soon begin.

On the 9 February 1944, letter from an SS-Obersturmbannführer on Himmler's personal staff at the KSRFSS to SS-Sturmbannführer Werth of the RSHA stated:

I remind you of this issue as it has become topical again. I would like to reopen communications on this subject as it has developed further since 9th September 1943. Today Dr. Kaltenbrunner has informed the Reichsführer-SS by telex that the SD concentration camp at Konstantynow has been arranged and transfers should begin soon. Please, confirm that occupancy has not yet been carried but will begin soon.<sup>24</sup>

This case has all the bearing of the classical paper trail that litters the remaining records of the Bandenbekämpfung. It is probable that we shall never know who these children were or what happened to them. The timeworn clichés of the innocents in wartime

<sup>23</sup> NA, T175, roll 21, 28.7.43. To Kaltenbrunner, Chief of SD and Sicherheitspolizei.

<sup>24</sup> NA, T175 roll 81, frames 2601971 to 2602627.

cannot describe what misery there was caused by the practice of Bandenbekämpfung. In this matter the objections of Major General Herff pale into insignificance. As a final word the brief sentence below made to the officers of the Dirlewanger Brigade seems to clarify the reality of Bandenbekämpfung: ‘With regard to the treatment of persons and villages I refer to verbal instruction of the 7<sup>th</sup> February 1943. The recording of the agricultural products is carried out simultaneously with the cleansing.’<sup>25</sup>

## V. Summary

At both levels of authority he was still only reporting the significant operations, emphasising the aggressive content of operations. There are several problems that arise from these findings that are not easily resolved. The first concerns Himmler use of all the reports he was receiving. He either conducted some form of detailed analysis or kept the results secret or lost interest once they were presented to Hitler. We can only hypothesize that Himmler and Bach-Zelewski were utilising typical ‘time and motion’ analysis. This logic is not so far fetched; after all the Royal Air Force employed operational researchers to make statistical inferences and assumptions of the bombing campaign.<sup>26</sup> If Himmler and to a certain extent Bach-Zelewski were employing ‘time and motion’; they might conclude that their increasing efforts were producing ever greater results. In other words as has so often happened in warfare the Germans were on a treadmill of escalation. This would also suggest that the SS leadership were undergoing massive self-delusion. Another question arises as to whether Himmler understood this and manipulated the situation for his own interests. The resonance from Himmler’s Posen speech in 1943, when he said Bandenbekämpfung had lead to an army group, referred to in chapter six, perhaps offers the greater clue.

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<sup>25</sup> NA, T354, roll 648, frame 0023, standing orders from von Gottberg to the Dirlewanger Battalion.

<sup>26</sup> Hastings, 1979, pp300-302.

### **Chapter Eight: Bandenbekämpfung – The Tactical Level**

Over the ages the tactical military art has been concerned with four closely related battlefield functions: hitting (or firepower), mobility, protection (or security), and shock action...The co-ordination of forces in time and space is known as synchronization, which is one of the essential requirements of successful tactics.<sup>1</sup>

The tactical level in German military history has been generally left to the realm of the military historian. This has tended to marginalise the subject to within a field of purely militaristic analysis and written on behalf of a 'militarily' interested readership. The consequence has been the near total absence of this crucial aspect of history from deeper academic scrutiny. German tactical methods have generally received high praise and almost continually since the Franco-Prussian War. This has tended to remain constant even in such failures as Stalingrad or Kursk, where the blame for defeat has been placed wholly upon Hitler's shoulders. This in turn has generated the impression of a distinctly German formidability in battlefield command and practice. Thus the German soldier has been as the victor of battles and the loser of wars. To unravel the depth and reasoning behind this myth would take yet another book. In this chapter German methods will be examined in counter-insurgency operations, referring to several operations including their planning and preparation.

#### **I. In the Opinion of the Protagonists**

The population: were on the whole peaceable, industrious and not interested in the war. They cooperated readily with German officials as long as they had protection against reprisals by their own people who held different opinions. Where there was no German protection they sided with the partisans, tolerating and supporting their camouflage measures. Collaboration was highest in agriculture. They took up all the cultural pursuits brought into the area - schools, churches, theatre, movies, newspapers in partisan dialect. There appeared to be no difference in attitude between Russia and Poland.<sup>2</sup>

A large number of captured senior officers of the German Army contributed reports on the anti-partisan war on behalf of the Foreign Military Studies of the US Army Historical Branch. Collectively they remained shy of questions of genocide, ethnic

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<sup>1</sup> Brigadier Mungo Melvin, 'Tactics', in Holmes, 2001, pp893-898.

<sup>2</sup> NA, RG338, fiche D-224, Securing lines of communication in enemy country, Generalleutnant Arthur Schwarznecker, 16<sup>th</sup> June 1947, p10-11.

cleansing and the mass deportation of labour for fear of being punished for war crimes. The value of these studies are therefore limited, but carefully scrutinised they do provide some interesting information. They generally felt that 1943 was the year of decisive action by the partisans.

### The Passive Approach

Generalleutnant(Luftwaffe) Ludwig Keiper and Generalleutnant Arthur Schwarznecker provided two detailed reports regarding the protection of supply and communication lines in Russia.<sup>3</sup> The main emphasis of the work was to project a 'passive' or 'active' image of German tactical methods. The defeat at Stalingrad and the withdrawal of the A-G Centre caused the increase in partisan activity. The population became more active as the system began to breakdown. Up to 1942 there were a few small actions. The partisans were flown into the area.<sup>4</sup>

Our defensive combat was made especially difficult by the fact that the partisans, even after they were assembled into formations (platoons, companies, battalions, etc), could not be identified as the enemy. They appeared as bands and rebels and ignored all international agreements of partisan warfare. Though they were equipped with infantry weapons, including mortars, they did not wear uniforms, but were always disguised as peasants, highway labourers, drivers, shepherds, etc. occasionally wearing captured uniforms of our own troops.' The bands changed tactics and the Germans had to constantly adapt to them. They generally lagged behind, letting the partisans dictate the law of action. Our forces were too weak for mopping-up the partisans in large-scale attack. The attacks on bridges were usually at night and involved a diversionary attack whilst another team placed charges. Gradually the Germans recognised the diversion attack was not pressed and this allowed the adoption of counter action. The main force would counter the partisans fire and then attack the demolition squad which was expected from directions adjacent to the firing. These tactics nearly always overcame the partisans.<sup>5</sup>

Railway installations were fortified so they could be easily defended with buildings reconfigured into good firing positions. To prevent stone splinters from injuring the troops planks of wood were placed around stone buildings. Buildings were

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<sup>3</sup> NA, RG 338, fiche D-157, Protecting supply lines in the Southern Ukraine, Generalleutnant Ludwig Keiper (Luftwaffe); and, NA, RG338, fiche D-224, *ibid*.

<sup>4</sup> NA, RG338, fiche D-224, Securing lines of communication in enemy country, Generalleutnant Arthur Schwarznecker, 16<sup>th</sup> June 1947.

<sup>5</sup> NA, RG338, fiche D-224, Securing lines of communication in enemy country, Generalleutnant Arthur Schwarznecker, 16<sup>th</sup> June 1947, p19.

linked by trenches with key ammunition points, fire-steps for shooting, with clear observation positions. The large long distance cables that linked communications between the Army High Command and the frontline were buried into a trench to protect them from explosion. A system of alarm signals was introduced. Bridges were provided with an all round defence. Blockhouses were constructed on either side of a bridge and with an unrestricted visibility of 3-400 metres. The main railway lines were cleared of trees and obstructions on both sides by up to a total of 1km. There were no details of who carried out all this work, it was the side of the story that remained silent.

Military forces were too weak and the local defence forces were old and physically unfit for strenuous guard and reconnaissance duties. Local inhabitants were 'alert sentries' were used to relieve the troops. They were dispersed at 55metre intervals and were expected to shout when they saw a partisan suspect. They were unarmed and were not expected to fight. They were not very reliable, and feared the repercussions by partisans especially against families. Local units always had to be reinforced by Germans to prevent them from being unreliable. The main equipment problem was the shortage of radios. The Fiesler Storch reconnaissance plane was perfect for patrols. Sleds in winter, cars in summer and cavalry most of the time. 'The evacuation of villages lying directly along the railroad, and the establishment of so-called death zones within which every civilian would be fired upon without challenge proved to be the purpose.'<sup>6</sup>

Patrols on the railways were usually about three men on foot. In rough terrain this was increased to a squad level. The patrol was equipped with field glasses, whistle, very pistol and automatic pistols. Sometimes a dog was brought along. At least one man had to be familiar with the terrain and the disarming of mines. At night patrols were meant to protect the road bed. This involved time spent listening for movement.

Removal of mines required a sharp and experienced eye, great dexterity, personal courage and certain mechanical ability.' Training in mine handling along with the passing on of new ideas on how to handle them from unit to unit.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> NA, RG 338, fiche D-157, Protecting supply lines in the Southern Ukraine, Generalleutnant Ludwig Keiper (Luftwaffe).

<sup>7</sup> NA, RG338, fiche D-224, Securing lines of communication in enemy country, Generalleutnant Arthur Schwarznecker, 16<sup>th</sup> June 1947, p35.

Security passes were monitored and the attitudes of local people for detection of suspicious behaviour. Special missions were decided upon the day of the patrol and decided by the commander. The patrol had to become irregular with different stopping points and start times and movement; the patrol book that logged each patrol and details of each patrol dictated this. This prevented too immediate reputation. Explosions were recorded by the positions of each patrol to help pinpoint the partisans. Shortages meant the prioritisation of patrols to nighttime and first daybreak before operations began. It was important to maintain visual sighting of a patrol or patrols to overcome the shortage of radios. Patrols could be supported by bicycle patrols, handcars on the railway line, and using the train to rapidly deliver the men for the next patrol sector. Use of armoured trains and tanks was especially useful. Patrols on roads and highways called for off road operations and searches of villages and hamlets. Civilians were always handled suspiciously,

Every civilian, every highway and railway workers, especially if those who directed the traffic were natives, was required to have an identification card, the form of which was changed from time to time.<sup>8</sup>

The "death zone" an area of 300 metres deep was strictly forbidden for anyone to enter. Any one found in that zone was shot. Local officials and notice boards warned everyone in all languages. The use of longer patrols in the reach and destroy vane involved new regulations of carry equipment, sleeping points and search of key areas.

Jagdkommandos were introduced with small numbers of good men and special equipment.<sup>9</sup> The numbers of men ranged between five and ten men depending upon circumstances. They were given the a fair balance of fire power with machine-pistols and sniper rifles. Their patrols usually lasted between seven to twenty-one days. They could search upto a 20km radius which was quite successful at deterring the partisans. The jump off point was crucial and had to be changed regularly. The problem of the villages remained as places of comfort but in fact were dangerous both for partisans and disease. Strong points remained on alert and wary at all times which also caused

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<sup>8</sup> NA, RG338, fiche D-224, Securing lines of communication in enemy country, Generalleutnant Arthur Schwarznecker, 16<sup>th</sup> June 1947, p37.

<sup>9</sup> BA-MA, RH27-1/98, 18 August - 10 September, 1 Panzer Division, seit 31, August 1942, Zusammenstellung von Jagdkommandos zur Bandenbekämpfung. This was a reconfirmation of an original order issued by General Halder, Chief of Staff of the Army, numbered OKH Nr. 11058/42.

exhaustive stress. Interestingly there were Freikorps precedents for such troops. They were used to combat bandit infiltrations in the Baltic area.<sup>10</sup>

Both the military and the railway co-operated in the guard patrols. Trains had boxcars placed at the front of the locomotive intended to explode mines. Telephone calls were made to confirm the departure and arrival of the train. In a return to neo-colonial warfare armoured trains were deployed to secure the lines.<sup>11</sup> All security resources were centralised to ensure the rapid deployment. The Jagdkommando formed the hunting missions although the usual complaint was that there were never enough troops to patrol the railways.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, they introduced a blocking style system with small numbers of troops, strong points, guard patrols and reserves of troops. The value of heavy machine-guns and mortars was a constant theme. Roads were constructed along the railway lines to enable more efficient patrols (this emphasised the German reliance upon wheeled transport).<sup>13</sup>

The police were regarded as central to preventing partisans from disrupting the civilian food supply for the Germans. Crops designated for the the Germans came under civilian administration control. The partisans: stole the crops themselves, preventing the growth of surplus crops, preventing the crops going to Germans and firing crops, farms and killing farmers. Thus the farmers supported the Germans in victory once the defeat set in they supported the partisans. The police were too small and the crop hand over detachments were even smaller. There were usually overlapping authorities but he alleges that the police failed to give advice upon the partisans. Most sabotage and assassinations were carried out by partisans working within installations. The agents were hardly ever caught or detected. They were conducted by special partisans and sometimes by women. They were well informed about the area and were linked to locals in the community.

They even wore German uniforms - In August 1943 a partisan dressed as an officer was arrested and killed in an exchange of fire in Minsk. The Commissar of Weissruthenia was assassinated allegedly by a women in his service. In November 1943

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<sup>10</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm von Oertzen, *Die deutschen Freikorps 1918-1923*, (München, 1936), p28.

<sup>11</sup> Wolfgang Sawodny, *Die Panzerzüge des Deutschen Reiches 1904-1945*, (Freiburg, 1996). Sawodny illustrated the extent of this military organisation when he identified a full command structure, with three regiments, a training battalion, with over 70 full length trains in operational service.

<sup>12</sup> NA, RG 338, fiche D-157.

<sup>13</sup> NA, RG 338, fiche D-157, Protecting supply lines in the Southern Ukraine, Generalleutnant Ludwig Keiper (Luftwaffe).



at Rovno a partisan disguised as a army Hauptmann entered the building of the General Commissar unchallenged (Hauptmann Köpernick), shot a high official at his desk and left unmolested. A German general was abducted by bandits in German uniform using military vehicles. He was taken to an airfield and flown to airfield. German officials were regularly fired upon. The partisan intelligence knew all the movements of leading German officials. The bombing incidents against police stations, official buildings and stations were constantly bombed on a daily basis.

### The Active Approach

As an occupied territory their existence was against international law. By reason of these facts, the German command was entitled to employ any countermeasures which were in line with the Hague Convention or were generally accepted as 'war usage'...This was a corruption of legitimate military warfare...One could predict, with almost mathematical precision, the gradual brutalisation of the conduct of war which, steadily increasing, inevitably had to lead to the most dreadful crimes on both sides...A soldier, upon whose life an attempt may be made in the most dastardly manner, sees "red" and reacts differently from a pettifogging prosecutor or judge behind the protective cover of his writing desk.<sup>14</sup>

Generalfeldmarschall Albert Kesselring of the Luftwaffe) was the German commander-in-chief Italy between 1943 and 1945. Kesselring formed a set of maxims to combat the partisan. He placed the guerrilla war on a parallel with that of the frontline. The German staff officers were to handle this as one of their principle tasks. If heavily equipped troops with tanks were available or in the area should be deployed against the partisans. Where possible employ the best troops. Change tactics regularly, supported by the intelligence services and reinforced by the work of the GFP and their informers (V-manner). The counter-measures that employed surprise were the best tactics. Avoiding the frontal attack which dispersed the guerrillas. The capture of the guerrilla camp was a waste of time unless they were in it. The best answer was to surround the guerrillas and systematically destroy them. Guerrilla raids had to be immediately counter-attacked. It was also essential to snatch a partisan and make them a prisoner for interrogation purposes. Attacking defended sites meant employing troops for assault like pioneers or engineers.

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<sup>14</sup> Kesselring, pp11-27.

Kesselring continued Fighting was to be continued until the enemy were destroyed. There were to be no new threats from the same group. The fighting had to be brutal and without carelessness, 'guerrilla warfare required a moral readjustment which in itself concealed great dangers.' (Page 26). He refused to use bombing because it was too indiscriminate and that was counter-productive to the overall counter-measures. Unlike in Yugoslavia - strange maxim - was it true? The vagueness of the Hague convention on such matters as: - taking and executing of hostages, - reprisals, their nature and scope, - collective measures and their prerequisites, - emergency measures and trial procedures. Pp 26 ambiguity and inadequacy in the rules of war lead to 'blunders' in the heat of battle. The problems with the codes of war are the persons and the local conditions that lead to a matrix of interpretations. The main problem can be the psychological and stress the troops are under. The use of specialists and the case of retaliation is for divisional commanders and above.

Selecting troops to combat guerrilla bands - Pp 16 - The size of units depended upon the problem but it could be as large as three divisions or corps. The Russian collaboration units were not fit for the front but were useful in this fight. He Mountain Div. In training was particularly excellent in combating brutal guerrillas. There were the men of the OT battalions, the so called stomach battalions, and the support units in the rear area. The concept of security by 1944 had become institutionalised such that supply troops in the rear area in village would deploy accordingly. The use of flying squads (Überfall Kommandos) and Jagdkommandos. Signals were essential and were never fully improved. Pp 18 - the band fight led to a moral breakdown in the rear areas. Serious problems occurred in the SS-Police areas because of the inconsistency of the troops. Pp 20 - Political pacification with the cooperation of almost all of the Italian church prelates, including the Vatican, political leaders, chiefs of the administration and other influential personalities. This was accomplished through propaganda, measures for the welfare of the population, amnesties, freeing men from military and labour duties and from transfer to Germany, and by protection against guerrillas.' Pp 21 the flight of the Winterarbeiter (winter-workers) to the guerrillas caused the remaining Italian government to panic. Those workers already with German organisations were denied leave and given a lot of welfare to keep them quiet. Anything to keep the bands denied of manpower. They introduced V-manner to control the behaviour from within.

Maintaining a roster of guerrilla returnees. Immediate arrest of suspicious characters. Pp 22 - ring-fencing the areas of the guerrillas to ensure the continual flow of supply traffic - blocking. The use of convoys. Continual movement of troops to deny the opportunity to get supplies. Increased security measures along the roads and railways.

## **II. Planning and Intelligence**

The Chef der Bandenkampfverbände had the duty to declare a Bandenkampfgebiet (combat of bandits region) if the intelligence reports provided strong enough evidence to support the decision. The rear areas in Russia, Yugoslavia and Italy were declared such Bandenkampfgebiet. An eastern front Luftwaffe file entitled 'Bandit Situation' and dated from the 29 January 1944 provides an example of a typical intelligence report:<sup>15</sup>

Soviet Bandits: they are directed from Moscow. They are opposed to Ukrainian and Polish independence. They are flown into the area and will destroy aeroplanes and Luftwaffe buildings.

Ukrainian Bandits: they want an independent Ukraine. They know the Soviets will not agree but they also believe the war is over for the Germans and so they side with the Soviets.

The Melnik Bandits: they are Ukrainians who collaborate and support the Germans.

The Bandera Bandits: they fear the loss of their community's continuation (literally they feared the loss of blood in terms of reproduction). They hate both the Germans and the Soviets and will fight each side.

However, at this time everything is fluid. The National Ukrainians appear hostile to the German civilian administration but neutral towards the German army. They only fight the Germans when the latter pilfers their food which tends to aggravate the situation.

Polish Bandits: they fight for their independence. The Poles and the Ukrainians have been enemies since before 1939. The Poles know that they have no possibility for independence from Germany, nor Russia. In fact near Ostrog the Poles fight against the Russians. The Poles expect Britain and America to intervene on their part.

Amongst the Bandits the Jews have a certain role, they work according to their nature, they act as spies. There is an independent Jewish bandit group operating near Leszniow. There has been an increase in the number of 'bodenständigen' realistic guerrillas (fundamentally trained). Their numbers have increased with the German retreat. The leaders of the bandits in this

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<sup>15</sup> BA MA, RL 21/243, office of Oberst Kollee, from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1944, folder 20, Ic-situation report (FeldLuftGauKommando XXV Gruppe Ic), 9-15 January 1944.

area have become active again while many bandits have joined the Red Army to serve as normal soldiers.

The planning process included the details of an operation. The following examples provide us with an idea of what was expected and how the forces were structured for the operations. In Operation Hornung (8<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> February 1943) one unit, the SS-Battalion Dirlewanger, posted the guidelines for combat on the 7<sup>th</sup> February 1943. The orders began by describing the size and location of the Feindlage (enemy camp). In that case an estimation of 3-4,000 partisans located in the area of Morocz-Milewicz-Lenin-Hryczynowicze-Głownykanal. The importance of the operation was that partisan forces threatened the railway line Gomel-Luhiniec-Brest. The partisans were well armed with field guns, armoured vehicles and snow vehicles.<sup>16</sup> In point two of the orders the operation was given its codename (Hornung) and the objectives. In Hornung they were to plunder the agricultural sectors intending to cut-off the partisans from their food supply sources, namely the peasant farmers. The commander of the action was confirmed as SS-Brigadeführer von Gottberg and in point three the Kampfgruppe was divided into 5 combat commands, listed thus:

Combat Group East: Under the commander of the 2nd Police Regiment (unnamed), including the regiment, Russian collaboration Battalion Rodjanoff, field battery 'Borissow' from the 1st SS Infantry Brigade and a tank section from the 18th Mountain Police Jäger Regiment.

Combat Group Nord: Under the commander of first battalion of the 23rd Police Regiment, the first battalion, SS-Sonderbataillon Dirlewanger, 57th Schuma Battalion, 112th Police Signals Company and the 12th Police Tank Company.

Combat group West: Under the commander of the 13th Police Regiment, the regiment less its III Battalion, 18th Schuma Battalion, a field battery from the 56th Schuma Artillery detachment, and, the mine-clearing and Bridge-building Technische Nothilfe detachment II.

Combat Group Süd: under the commander of the 10th Police Regiment, the regiment less its 1st Battalion, a detachment from 11th Police regiment (originally from 103rd Schuma battalion), 1st Balten Battalion and heavy company 'Kohlstadt'.

Combat Group South-east: two battalions of the 101st Infantry Regiment (Wehrmacht).

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<sup>16</sup> NA T-354, roll 650, Bataillons-Befehl für das Unternehmen "Hornung", 7<sup>th</sup> February 1943.

Directly under von Gottberg: Bomber flying school Bobruisk and 11th Police Signals.

Sonderkommando of the SD: working within the exercise under Gottberg.

The combat plan demanded a rapid manouvre to attack and destroy the bandit leadership. The orders then detailed the lines of attack for each of the units participating in the operation. This included the specific placement of companies and tactical units in the field. They were instructed to report their actions as soon as possible and within the headquarters by 5.00pm each day. Wounded were to be handled through the battalion medical facilities. The call signals were listed for when contact was made with the enemy and as the fighting developed. Transport was allocated and specific march routes. The placement of the SD troop and its commander was noted as being with the kampfgroupe headquarters. The dependency on the collaboration units is now clearer from examining this planning phase. The fact that these collaboration units were in control of heavy weapons shows they were not just poorly equipped with captured rifles.

The purpose behind operations changed with the policy of the day. The main intention of destroying partisans might also involve the removal of villages known to support them. Again they could also mean the eradication of Jews as in the Stroop Report. They may have been concerned with the hunting down of an infiltration by a large partisan force. Gradually more and more civilians were being rounded up for forced-labour in the Reich. The volume of captured booty was not always in comparison with the numbers of partisans killed or captured. Although the partisans were not always well armed, there were some significant weapons found. This leads to further suspicion as the number of times large field guns were listed but why there was no evidence of towing vehicles or horses. With the partisans allegedly moving over the ground up to 60 kilometres in a day the location of these weapons some times appears strange. Unless of course they were intended for the protection of the encampment, in which case they seem to have been completely useless.

### **III. Operations**

According to one of the German contributors to the Foreign Military Study, Gustav Hoehne, 'The rules for hunting game with beaters make the best directive.'<sup>17</sup> Using the

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<sup>17</sup> Gustav Hoehne, FMS, fiche C-037, *ibid.*, p19.

reported figures for Operation Hermann in 1943, we saw how forces were drawn from a security zone to and supported by units brought in for an operation. The SSPF-Weissruthenia headquartered in Minsk, had deployed approximately 9,031 men. The German units accounted for about 6,991 men, the units brought in from the central reserve included 2<sup>nd</sup> SS-Polizei Regiment, 31<sup>st</sup> Polizei-Schützen Regiment, SS-Sonderkommando Dirlewanger, and Police Panzer company, as well as the SD detachment. The balance included 2,040 men drawn from Schuma battalions and motorised Gendarmerie sections. This first of all shows that the Germans remained the dominant manpower. This, of course, had leadership benefits including preventing the impression that the foreign units did the bulk of the work. Secondly, it enabled troops to rest and allowed for a sort of shift system to develop between aggressive operations and regular police duties. Thirdly, it enabled the troops to conduct maintenance and rest and form a strong response to all incursions. This is probably why the Germans were able to maintain a high level of preparedness and reduce their numbers of losses. We now move on to look at an operation where the Germans had to respond to a deep incursion through Russian, Polish and even Carpathian territory by a strong Soviet partisan force.

### Countering Kovpak

The Kovpak Operation of July-September 1943 presented the Germans with a different set of problems. It proved that a concerted effort on the part of the partisans would allow a march into Poland relatively unchecked. The operation was actually not militarily successful; however, it left a deep impression on the German security forces, so much so that Bach-Zelewski referred to them after the war:

[T]here wasn't a Kolpak man who went into capture. They were the most fanatical and courageous partisans that I have ever seen. They were strictly disciplined that if one of them was wounded, his comrade had to shoot him so that he did not get into German capture and betray any secrets. I have often wished that the German troops would be as courageous as some of these partisans.<sup>18</sup>

Major-general S.A. Kovpak was a Soviet partisan leader, and hero, who led his partisan brigade 1,500 kilometres behind the Germans lines, as far as the Carpathian Mountains (please refer to map 3, page 358). His forces' movement attracted no attention from the

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<sup>18</sup> BZ-IMT, 24<sup>th</sup> October 1945

Germans, having begun within two weeks of Bach-Zelewski's promotion. There are two surviving sets of files from the Kovpak raid of June-July-August 1943.<sup>19</sup> Kovpak published his memoirs in 1947 providing a remarkable collection of papers.<sup>20</sup> In certain places the records synthesize and make interesting analysis of the same incidents.

Kovpak had been a long serving member of the Communist Party and had fought in the Civil War in 1920. He had a force of 3,000 men that marched in the Carpathians deep in German territory. On the 18<sup>th</sup> July 1943, Kovpak correctly identified the 4<sup>th</sup> SS Police Regiment in the town of Rosulna and dispatched a small force to deal with them. The fighting according to the Germans involved a sneak attack at 23.40hrs. The German unit that suffered the initial attack was the 7<sup>th</sup> company, which was later, assisted by the 6<sup>th</sup> company. Kovpak insisted that the SS were 'exterminated' but in fact the Germans suffered eighteen dead and seventeen wounded. The Kovpak report, unlike that of Stroop's, was a daily analysis of the measures taken to shut down a relatively fast moving Soviet partisan force that travelled through 1,500 kilometres of German occupied territory. The Kovpak Operation of July-September 1943 faced the Germans with a different set of problems. It proved that a concerted effort on the part of the partisans could march into Poland with relative impunity. The operation was not militarily successful; however, for a Soviet partisan leader to take a force 1,500 kilometres behind the German lines, as far as the Carpathian Mountains, had a deeply psychological effect.

The German reports show how well the security system operated once it had been triggered. The timing of the trigger by the incursion is interesting for according to Kovpak the force set out on the 12<sup>th</sup> June 1943. The report by the SS officer responsible for its pacification, Obergruppenführer Krüger (HSSPF General-Government), was dated from the 7<sup>th</sup> July 1943. The Germans found out afterwards (through the capture of Kovpak's records) that the partisans were being given precise orders and supplies since May 1943. They had dressed in German uniforms to breakthrough lines and pass villages without being approached. The march was highly disciplined, with quiet routines and methods to suppress their being observed. They were able to use the terrain to take advantage of the cover. Reading between the lines, there is a strong suggestion

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<sup>19</sup> T-175, Roll 222, SS report to the army commander in the General-government and BA-MA RL20/284, SS report to Luftwaffe commander in Lemberg. The contents differ and therefore are complementary.

<sup>20</sup> S.A.Kovpak, *Our Partisan Course*, (London, 1947).

that the Germans were in full admiration for Kovpak's action. Once the system of security was triggered Kovpak cohesion as an effective force was broken down. Every move he made was countered by a German or axis ally blocking force:

Having paved highways and motor transport at their disposal, the Hitlerites quickly sealed all the exits from the mountains and began to close the ring of encirclement.... The enemy remained on the defensive. He reckoned on wearing us down, compelling us to expend all our ammunition, and meanwhile so to strengthen the solidity of the ring that not a single man would be able to break out.<sup>21</sup>

The Germans wanted to capture Kovpak alive but he escaped and remained a thorn to the Germans until the end of the war. Later, Kovpak, in his memoirs, either did not realise or was too proud to admit the effectiveness of the German operation.<sup>22</sup>

Interestingly, Kovpak recalled being continuously under observation and attack from Messerschmitt. The German records indicate that night-fighter pilots training in this area were flying Messerschmitt ME110 twin-engine fighter-bombers. The subject of air cover during operations has not received any attention from histories of the Luftwaffe. Aerial support was common to nearly all German anti-partisan operations. The records of the 54<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group flew round the clock missions while based in Russia. In one report from the 8<sup>th</sup> July 1942, the flyers in their fighters (Me 109 and FW 190) were ordered to angle the bombing precisely. The types of bombs used included the single 50Kg. and 10 Kg Splitterbomben (bundles of splinter bombs).<sup>23</sup> Flying operations were co-ordinated by Luftwaffe liaison and signals troops working alongside the SS.

#### **IV. Evaluation and Casualty Reports**

At the conclusion of one anti-partisan operation, code-named 'Marsh Fever', in early 1942, the SS commander reported 389 partisans killed, 1,274 suspects shot, and 8,350 Jews liquidated.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Kovpak, 1947, p115.

<sup>22</sup> The Germans recorded Kovpak's name as Kolpak. This is interesting if not ironic, because there was an Oberst Kolpak who commanded a German Freikorps Battalion in Letten in the Baltic, in 1919, Oertzen, 1936, p 28.

<sup>23</sup> BA MA RL10-290, Luftwaffe Flying Operations, JG 54 Kriegstagebuch, November 1942, anti-partisan operations between 11<sup>th</sup> July and 11<sup>th</sup> August 1942. The III/KG 55, 28<sup>th</sup> September 1942 to 27<sup>th</sup> February 1943, flew Heinkel HE 111 bombers and Me 108 (training aircraft), attacked bandits around Leningrad supporting ground troops.

<sup>24</sup> Cooper, p57.



The after action report by the 286<sup>th</sup> Security Division of its Kampfgruppe Adler operation in August 1942, provided a simple analysis: 1,381 enemy dead and 428 prisoners. The Kampfgruppe had suffered 25 dead, 2 missing and 64 wounded. The report did not elaborate the performance of the troops but simply referred to the operation and the results.<sup>25</sup> In the reports made by the Dirlewanger Battalion following Operation Hermann (14<sup>th</sup> July to 6<sup>th</sup> August 1943, new figures were being reported two weeks after its close.

**Table 40: Casualty figures for the KSRFSS (March-April 1942)<sup>26</sup>**

FORMATION	KILLED	WOUNDED	MISSING	SICK
Officers	9	17	1	4
NCOs and Men	309	852	65	555

The monthly collection of casualties included the formal manner in which reports were to be produced following an action.<sup>27</sup> The means by which Orpo casualties were to be collected was also subject to rules and regulation.<sup>28</sup> Finding the total losses incurred during Bandenbekämpfung would be almost impossible but the size and scale of losses is quite easily found in the after action records. The system of reporting body counts also worked to record the number of German and allied casualties. There are some surviving central reports that give overall police casualties but they also include those suffered from normal operational combat. For example at the end of 1942 total police losses were broken down into three categories. The killed through combat had cost 147 officers and 4,625 men; wounded through enemy action, a further 179 officers and 9,126 men; sickness and ill health, 11 officers and 229 men. Losses for policemen serving in the Wehrmacht were a total 8,624 with 9,389 wounded and 251 prisoners of war.<sup>29</sup> The losses contained within the Stroop Report also confirmed the youthful age ranges of those involved in Bandenbekämpfung, in 1943.

The SS-Police loss-analysis drawn up by HSSPF General-Government (table 41) for the action against Kovpak raises some general questions about the collection of

<sup>25</sup> NA, T354, roll 649,

<sup>26</sup> NA, T175, roll 16, frames 2519158 to 2519698, papers of the KSRFSS. The reports were called , casualties, sickness and diseases (Verluste, Infektionen und Seuchen). Most reports referred to the plague of Typhus (Fleckfieber) and that new cases had to be reported immediately.

<sup>27</sup> NA, T354, roll 648, Monatliche Zusammenstellung der Verluste (feindliche und eigene) und Beute, 12<sup>th</sup> July 1943, HSSPF Russland-Mitte, Operations Officer.

<sup>28</sup> NA, T354, roll 648, Besondere Anordnungen für die Versorgung, 12<sup>th</sup> November 1943, Curt von Gottberg,

<sup>29</sup> NA T175, roll 3, Kurt Daluege's January 1943 paper on the state of the Orpo.

losses. The scorecard of losses by type and date indicate a system of collecting losses. Yet no similar loss analysis appears have survived from the files of the Chef der Bandenkampfverbände. The losses for Army Group Centre rear area (Table 41) were filed for the period December 1943 to May 1944, prior to Operation Bagration. They appeared to follow the same pattern and style of analysis. This raises further doubts as to the reasons for the absence of casualty lists from the Chef der Bandenkampfverbände.

**Table 41: Combined casualties from the Kovpak operations (1943)**

	GERMAN	FOREIGN	GERMAN	FOREIGN	GERMAN	FOREIGN
DATE	DEAD	DEAD	WOUNDED	WOUNDED	MISSING	MISSING
7.7.43	12	2 (Ukrainian)	3	-	-	-
8.7.43	38	4 (Ukrainian)	4	2	2	36 (Ukrainian)
11.7.43	1	-	1	-	-	-
12.7.43	12	-	11	-	-	-
14.7.43	-	-	1	-	-	-
16.7.43	11	-	7	-	-	-
18.7.43	17	-	21	-	-	-
19.7.43	2	-	-	-	-	-
21.7.43	1	-	4	-	-	-
25.7.43	-	-	2	-	-	-
26.7.43	9	-	16	-	-	-
27.7.43	-	-	1	-	1	-
28.7.43	1	-	3	-	-	-
30.7.43	2	-	5	1 (Volga-Tartar)	-	-
31.7.43	-	-	-	1 (Volga-Tartar)	-	-
2.8.43	-	-	6	-	-	-
3.8.43	1	-	-	-	-	-
4.8.43	26	-	27	-	-	-
6.8.43	1	-	3	-	-	-
7.8.43	5	-	1	-	-	-
9.8.43	-	-	2	-	-	-
10.8.43	-	-	1	-	-	-
11.8.43	-	-	1	-	-	-
12.8.43	1	1	-	-	-	-
14.8.43	-	-	3	-	-	-
Total	141	7	125	4	4	36

**Table 42: German and foreign losses Army Group Centre Rear Area (1944)**

		43 DEC	44 JAN	44 FEB	44 MAR	44 APR	44 MAY
<b>a). Enemy</b>	a) Dead	586	676	1175	1165	796	819
<b>losses</b>	b). Defectors	2	1	103	17	2	10
	c). Prisoners	239	134	217	302	126	64
<b>b). German</b>	aa) Dead	140	157	151	96	133	95
<b>losses:</b>	bb) Wounded	321	259	172	147	270	230
	cc) Missing	8	11	16	18	25	11
<b>b) Allies:</b>	aa) Dead	31	65	64	89	-	-
	bb) Wounded	66	142	165	84	-	-
	cc) Missing	40	25	3	22	-	-
<b>c) Local</b>	aa) Dead	22	26	24	16	54	9
<b>collaborators:</b>	bb) Wounded	6	1	21	13	65	26
	cc) Missing	-	8	13	7	56	1
<b>d) Officials</b>	aa) Dead	25	31	12	2	19	2
	bb) Wounded	21	5	12	9	23	9
	cc) Missing	17	5	11	23	4	21
<b>d) Run aways:</b>	a) Hiwi	185	128	99	154	56	62
	b) Local collaborators	1	-	16	85	63	7
	c) Order officials	-	-	-	15	12	-
	d) Local workers	-	7	4	3	-	10

### Body-counts and operations

The considerable discrepancy between the number of ‘partisans’ killed and the German casualties on the one hand, and the minor difference between the number arrested and those later executed, point to the dialectical dimension of the Wehrmacht’s reprisal policy.<sup>30</sup>

The body count, as both of symbol of victory and military prowess were much in evidence in the armed forces culture. Since the beginning of the war, German combatants had accounted for their victories. The Luftwaffe had used ‘kills’ to denote the numbers of enemy aeroplanes shot down. Tank crews like fighter pilots painted symbols onto their tanks to boast of their ‘kills’. Submarine commanders followed the same policy, as did bomber crews, warships and flak gunners. One Luftwaffe pilot shot down over 320 Russian aeroplanes, a Waffen-SS tank commander destroyed over 188 enemy tanks and a submariner sank nine ships in one sortie. The killing of the enemy was exalted at all levels, in the public media and through formal ceremony. Thus the

<sup>30</sup> Jürgen Forster, 1994, p98.

Bandenkampfverbände were not the only organisation to pass reports up to senior officers and the Führer listing enemy casualties.

Within the administrative routine of the Bandenkampfverbände the collection of numbers continued beyond partisan casualties. There was a general listing of absolutely everything. This included the introduction of the masterpiece of security bookkeeping, where everything was accounted for. The numbers of partisans killed in combat, killed after combat, suspects dispatched, and even on occasion's detail of the animals killed deliberately. After the numbers of killed came the amount of prisoners, and labour rounded up by male, female and children. Finally, the numbers of farm animals taken in what were called the Erfassungsaktion (round-up actions) were accounted for. There can be little doubt that the balance in the accounting between the enemy and the friendly forces, which at the time, projected an image of success, but which today only reflects the horror of this campaign.<sup>31</sup>

The emphasis remained directed toward the social control of the indigenous populations:

The morale of the population has been lowered a good deal by the labour allocation to Germany since the recruiting had to be carried on in most cases by imposing a forced quota on the various communities.<sup>32</sup>

Patrols on roads and highways called for off road operations and searches of villages and hamlets. Civilians were always handled suspiciously, 'Every civilian, every highway and railway worker, especially if those who directed the traffic were natives, was required to have an identification card, the form of which was changed from time to time.'<sup>33</sup>

Bandit suspects were treated with the utmost brutality. The most extreme aspect of Bandenbekämpfung was the execution of civilians on the grounds that they were suspects or bandit-helpers. This, of course led, to the horrors of denunciation and arbitrary destruction of villages on the grounds that they were suspects. The form of the suspect remained undefined but the measures for handling the problem referred again to a measure practised in the First World War on the Western Front:

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<sup>31</sup> NA, T354, roll 648, Tactics against Bandits, unnamed company commander, Dirlewanger Brigade, 5<sup>th</sup> September 1943. In one during an action in a forest the battalion located German and black uniforms.

<sup>32</sup> NA, USMT, High Command Case 12, p10148, 285<sup>th</sup> Security Division, 8<sup>th</sup> June 1943.

<sup>33</sup> Ludwig Keiper, FMS, D-157, Protecting supply, observations about FK 509 and the Alexandrowka-Suamenka- Protopopowka - Kremenschug railway line, April 1942 to July 1943 (n.d.), p37.

Informers alerted the partisans of approaching German search parties. 'It was difficult to identify the inhabitants of any village, since the population lists of the Ukrainian municipal authorities were rarely found to be in order. On the other hand, a satisfactory expedient was to have the names of the occupants posted daily in chalk on the door of the house.'<sup>34</sup>

The Germans remained largely undecided in their attitude toward the villages. They might be places of danger, 'The problem of villages remained as places of comfort but in fact were dangerous both for partisans and disease.'<sup>35</sup> Alternatively, they were places to shelter from the extreme climatic conditions and a source for supplies, 'Supply depots were linked into the system. Small villages were turned into all round defence. In large villages, supply depots were placed in pockets to collect defensive measures within areas in the village.'<sup>36</sup>

#### Accreditation and awards

On the 28 June 1944 the personal staff of the RFSS received a radio message:

Recommendation of the Knights Cross: von Gottberg as HSSPF Russland-Mitte had been successful in his job of combating the bandits with his designated forces. His aggressive fighting had significantly reduced the unpleasant nuisance (unwesens). The operations of the bandits had seriously threatened military operations. In the area Uschatschi and the bandit area of Pelikesees his last large scale operations were outstanding. His leadership of the Kampfgruppe, formed from police and a multitude of subordinate forces from the army, he was outstanding, in planning, participation and execution of the operations. Great success resulted from his foresight, flexible leadership and ruthless (rücksichlos) perseverance during the highpoints (brandpunkt) in the fighting. Next to the great plunder he took, there has been a release of men for other operations. His success can be judged by the prisoners, deaths, destruction and plundered (erbeutetem) material and the paralysis (Lähmung) of the bandits in Weissrussland, with only a few losses.

Signed Busch, General Field Marshal und Oberbefehlshaber das Heeresgruppe Mitte.

For his German Cross in Gold (July 1943 - 25.8.1943) Bach-Zelewski wrote the following:

Von Gottberg with the SS-Polizeiverbände, army and Luftwaffe has carried

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid

out effective operations against the bandits. The high point was the great Operation Cottbus, where in critical days it was his leadership that saw it through. Thus:

Operation 'Nürnberg': 19 to 25 November 1942, between Gleboki and Wilna. 1st SS Infantry Brigade, 14th SS-Police Regiment and 2 Schutzmannschaft-Battalions and local gendarmes.

Operation 'Hamburg': 10 to 21.12. 1942, in forests north of Slonim. 2nd SS-Police Regiment, 1st Battalion 23rd SS-Police Regiment and 1st Battalion 24th Regiment. 3 Schuma Battalions. Combined enemy losses included 3,186 dead, 3 tanks, 7 artillery pieces, 5 sub-machine guns, 12 light machine guns and 367 rifles and 19 bandit camps destroyed.

Operation 'Altona': 22 to 25 12. 1942, south of Slonim, Enemy dead 1,059.

Operation 'Franz': 5 to 14 January 1943, east of Ossipoitschi - 1,349 enemy dead 9 camps destroyed - 280 rifles, 3 cannons and large amounts of ammo.

Operation 'Erntefest': 18.1. to 5.2.1943, military road Minsk-Sluzk, Dead 3,721. 433 rifles, 2 artillery pieces, mortars and 28 machine guns captured.

Operation 'Hornung': 8 to 26.2.1943, Pripet marshes south of Sluzk. 2 SS-Police Regiments, 2 SS-Police Battalions and 5 Schuma, Enemy dead 9,662

Grand Operation 'Cottbus': 28.4 to 21.6. 1943, north of Borissow, The biggest operation in Russland-Mitte involved 16,662 men from the Wehrmacht and Police. Enemy dead 6,042, 3,709 bandit suspects shot and 599 prisoners. Cost 127 dead (3 officers), 535 wounded (10 officers). 29 pieces of artillery, 18 mortars, 61 machine-guns, 16 anti-tank guns, 45 sub machine guns, 905 rifles and munitions.

By von dem Bach [Zelewski]<sup>37</sup>

The recipients of the Knights' Cross (Ritterkreuz) were endowed with many financial benefits. The families of posthumous bearers of this medal received reasonably large payments of money by order of Hitler.<sup>38</sup> Near the end of the war Bach-Zelewski had to medals created, the Bandenbekämpfung-abzeichen (the anti-bandit badge) and the Warsaw Shield (1944). The former was issued in gold, silver and bronze and depended upon the number of mission days a trooper was involved in Bandenbekämpfung. This medal depicted a hydra killed by a sword, with a Swastika on its hilt. This was of course a symbol from the Freikorps days, when even then the communists were depicted as the hydra. In 1945, months after the campaign had ended men who had fought in the east

<sup>37</sup> NA, SS personnel file, Curt von Gottberg.

<sup>38</sup> NA, T77, roll 853, frames 5599322 to 5598829, endowments to widows and family members.

began to receive their awards. The Warsaw Shield was also issued many months after the destruction of the city, and it is known that only a few received their awards.

### The Bureaucracy of the Kampfgruppe

The operational performance of Bandenbekämpfung also included a high degree of bureaucratic content. This covered a wide range of reporting, recording and distribution of information. This bureaucracy was duplicated at all levels, through the routine of 'orders of the day'. This was the usual form of communication and was generally disseminated the formation adjutants.<sup>39</sup> The formal reporting of body counts and casualties was ordered into a routine alongside the filing of after action reports. In an interrogation Bach-Zelewski said Himmler insisted that lists of the enemy dead include their racial origin.<sup>40</sup> The monthly collection of casualties included the formal manner in which reports were to be produced following an action. The actions of the bandit were to open the reason for the report, including plunder, terrorism, sabotage and murder. The details of the partisans were to be listed and as detailed as possible. Where possible their characteristics had to be mentioned (Jews, Poles, Women etc) and distinguishing uniforms or markings had to be mentioned. The three methods of enemy casualties were to be those 'fallen in combat', the execution of bandit-suspects (erledigte Bandenverdächtige) and prisoners. The report had to detail the capture or destruction of enemy weapons, camps and supplies.<sup>41</sup> One might suggest the example draft reports ensured certain results by their requirement for result orientated data. There were also non-standard reports on SS casualties such as that of an order issued by Himmler regarding the last sons of families.<sup>42</sup> There were 14 categories to this order, which was intended to protect the last line of families that had already suffered losses in the war. There was a strong racial biological emphasis to Himmler's thinking in this context of protecting the life blood of the nation and the future children of Germany.

The Kampfgruppe were able to regularise the taking of leave. The issue of cigarettes, vodka and wine was subject to rules, mainly of payment. Vodka cost 5.60

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<sup>39</sup> NA, T354, roll 648, frame 0027, Tagesbefehl, 11<sup>th</sup> November 1943. Kampfgruppe Adjutant.

<sup>40</sup> BZ-USMT, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1945.

<sup>41</sup> NA, T354, roll 648, frame 0780 to 0782, Monatliche Zusammenstellung der Verluste (feindliche und eigene) und Beute, 12<sup>th</sup> July 1943, HSSPF Russland-Mitte, Operations Officer.

<sup>42</sup> T354, roll 648, frame 00432, Erfassung der letzten und einzigen Söhne, 9<sup>th</sup> December 1943.

RMs per litre and wine was free.<sup>43</sup> In 1943 the issue of books, and ensuring the men had the correct reading material, was still a major concern of the RFSS. The traditional New Year's greeting from the commander to the troops offered the same message as that of the prior year:

Order of the day, 31st December 1943:

Best wishes to all the leaders, NCOs and men. Thank you for your services in the last year. With fanatical belief we are entering the New Year.

Curt von Gottberg<sup>44</sup>

The troops' welfare was a constant theme of the general military bureaucracy. In a report 1943 von Gottberg's medical staff officers circulated preventative advice entitled 'Truppenhygiene' within a regular orders of the day posting. It was intended that the guidelines should be read by an officer then passed down to the men unit by unit. The men were advised to bathe regularly to get rid of the lice. To facilitate this there were going to be more baths and saunas built. It then advised the men to repair damaged footwear, stating that low degrees of cold and wet weather were the major contributors to frost bite. Further, that it was important not to wear too tight boots, better to leave some room for air. In this context, it was recommended to only wear one pair of socks and to change them regularly especially during very cold spells (this point was underlined). Alcohol should be restricted to use only when the men were in warm rooms, as this was a major cause of leading men to their deaths by falling asleep in the cold. It was suggested that latrines were to be built as a shield from the wind close to the sleeping quarters. The fight against a variety of animals including rats and mice (Ungezieferbekämpfung) was to be carried out with traps, disinfectant and Kresolseifenlösung, especially to combat the louse (Tularämie). It was then explained that there was going to be an expansion in the local hospital to take more wounded. In the last point seven, the men were warned against entering Russian houses especially to shelter against the cold. It was explained that all troop and column commanders had to be made aware of the dangers of this practice, namely the potential to contract typhus.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup> NA, T354, roll 648, frame 0004, Dirlewanger Battalion order for the issue of alcohol and cigarettes.

<sup>44</sup> NA, T354, roll 648, frame 0001, New Year's Greeting from Von Gottberg, 31<sup>st</sup> January 1943.

<sup>45</sup> NA T354, roll 648, frame 00682 to 0689, Kampfgruppe von Gottberg orders of the day February 1943.



## V. Operation Nasses Dreieck

This operation appears to have been typical of operations at the height of the Bandenbekämpfung campaign. It was neither large-scale in terms of forces, nor limited to SS authority or control. Rather it was a compact operation, that relied upon a mix of forces and authorities. It was called an anti-bandit operation, instigated near to the river Desna and under the regional authorities based in Kiev (refer to map 3, page 358), including the Wehrmacht and Police. The period of the operation was eleven days, falling between the 5 and 16 May 1943.<sup>46</sup> It was common to all reports, irrespective of Wehrmacht or SS, that a provision was made to explain the general situation and why the operation was being undertaken:

Bandit situation (Bandenlage):

Before the Operation Nasses Dreieck started the force controlled by the Farmer Naumenko included 800-1,000 armed bandits. They had terrorised the local inhabitants who worked for the Germans. On the 24th April 1943 they had attacked a German company and a police point at Pirnoff, killing 23 and wounding 30. So far the questioning of the prisoners has shown this to have been the following information:

Band Naumenko, is around 300 armed men with rifles, 6 machine-guns, 15 light machine guns, 4 mortars and about 30 automatic weapons. The members of the band come from the local villages. Later Naumenko forced people from the village of Shukin and district to join his band. A second Band of around 250 members is led by the brother or sister of Naumenko.

At the banks of the river Desna the district of Wypolsowo und Karpilowka under the command of Captain Spenatzky runs a detachment of around 250 members with heavy and light machine-guns, automatic rifles, and Russian rifles. This detachment was known to have attacked Pirnoff on the 24th April.

Another unit involved in this area was the 221st Cossack Detachment, which had worked for the Germans, as yet its movements remain unexplained. The leader of another bandit group is senior Lieutenant Kim who was sent by Moscow, he is of average build and 35 years of age. He generally stays in Naumenko's camp. He has declared himself Kommissar of Rayon Wysschaja Dubetschnja. Because of his job he has never accepted German authority. We do not know if Naumenko has contacts with other bandits or with Kolpak (Kovpak). Naumenko sees himself as a National

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<sup>46</sup> BA-MA, RL 20/302, Kriegstagebuch 3 Kdr. Fl. Bau 4/XIII, Oberst Altermann, anlage 4 (document 9-16), Kampfgruppe Römer, abschrift (report dated 18.5.1943), Unternehmen Nasses Dreieck' vom 5.5. bis 16. 5. 1943.

hero and ruler of the southern wet triangle. He is popular and well respected.

Thus we can see that intelligence had indeed become the primary tool for the security forces, as Kesselring suggested. The detailed knowledge of before and after an action reports, suggests the Germans knew exactly the partisan strength and their intentions.

Plan for 9th May: Gruppe Nieder: drive from Wysschaja Dutschnja to the north and occupy Woropajewo and Starajesselo. To form a secured area and commit to reconnaissance toward Shukin and west of the forest. The Cossack Detachment: to ride south towards Woropajewo Tarassowitschi. To conduct reconnaissance north and north east of the highpoint at Tschernin. Gruppe Ockert: defence and reinforcement of the supply route Browary, Letki, Wysschaja, Dubetschnja and Woropajewo with strong points in Puchowka, Roshny, Letki, Wysschaja Dubetschnja and Woropajewo. Wasserschutzpolizei: securing the Desna and the crossing points. [All of this was completed on the 9th May].

On the 10th May, Group Nieder set up their heavy weapons. Their attack was to be supported with mortar and heavy fire from the eastern bank of the Desna supplied by the 120th Signals Regiment (Luftwaffe). After searching in a north-eastern area of Shukin, the bandits blew up the bridge closing the supply route. The troops secured the bridge and helped prepared for its repair. This was completed in 5 hours. Later, with further heavy weapon support they entered Bodenki. Immediately they took that village they moved onto Ssuwid. There was still weak resistance. The bandit defenders in the cellars were all shot. The troops had crossed from Bodenki in knee high water and by evening had secured the village. The Cossacks attacked on the 10th May and captured Tschernin.

On the 11th May 1943, Gruppe Nieder moving North and North-western clearing the area of bandits from houses and cellars. Also on the 11th May, the Cossack Detachment north and north-east had crushed the enemy resistance at Nowosselki and in the evening there was a Stuka attack on Oschitki. The district was cleansed of enemies and returned to its legal standing.

On the 12th May, Group Nieder marched and marked mine-fields and pacified Wypolsowo and later was joined by the Hungarian units. The Cossack Detachment marched from Nowosselki and Oschitiki toward the east. They came through swamps and minefields when near Nowosselki-Oschitki they met strong enemy resistance. The Wasserschutzpolizei cleared the river islands and shot 14 bandits. The inhabitants and prisoners gave information that the mass of bandits was in the woods.

The clearing of the woods began to take place on the 13th May. The Hungarian units moved into the area ready for the later schwerpunkt on the 14th May, at height 105.2. On the 14th May, the ring around the bandits in

the Dolgoja-Swamp was completed. Group Nieder, the Cossacks and the Hungarians began to close in on height 105.2. To begin to cut up the bandit group.

On the 15th and 16th May, the bandits were destroyed. The ring around the Dolgoja-Swamp was strengthened with the support of heavy weapons. With small pauses, the bandits up to their necks in water in the swamp were unmercifully attacked by mortars, heavy artillery and heavy machine-guns. The result was that many bandits tried to escape but were destroyed in the process. A large number found death by iron and water in the swamp.

In the case of Operation Nasses Dreieck there had already been some action and so the operational details came with an explanation of the conditions:

#### Operational preparations

Because of the unsuitability of the forces available for this operation the commander decided to use bluff. This was successful. We decided not to clear-out the forest because of the shortage of forces and given the additional problem of the swamp. We had reports that the bandits had occupied villages, and crossing points along the river Desna. It was decided to remove the villages from the control of the bandits to reduce their sources of support. Following the attack at Pirnoff on the 24th April on the 26th April Major Nieder with 1st Company Field-Railway March Detachment and one Alarmeinheit were sent in to take control of the villages Darniza, Wysschaja Dubetschnja and Lebedew Chutor. One company and 3 Motor Patrol Boats of the Wasserschutzpolizei Kiev were to retake control of the river crossing.

On the following day, forces were marched from Kiev. There were various Landesschützen and training troops; 2 sections of 20mm Flak (motorised); 3 Gendarmerie sections (motorised); 5 Squadrons of Cossack.

On the 6th May they were organised into 5 attack groups:

Group Nieder Stosstrupp A: 1 company, 1 Pak section und 1 section of Flak;

Group Stosstrupp B: 90 men, 1 Gendarmerie section (motorised) and 1 section of Flak;

Group Stosstrupp C: 50 men, 1 Gendarmerie section (motorised), and the Wasserschutzpolizei..

Gruppe Conen – Cossack Detachment of 5 Squadrons.

Gruppe Ockert - 2 companies of Railway and Construction troops; 2 companies of Schuma.

After the evening tactical conference on the 8th May, it was agreed to attack

on the 9th May. The enemy positions north of the line Woropajewo-Tarassowitschi-Shukin. Camps in Bodenki and Sauwid, in the forest east of Tschernin and across the heights of point 105.<sup>47</sup>

Regarding casualties, von Römer left the following comment:

The casualties for the period 9th–16th May 1943 was 8 dead and 23 wounded. The Cossacks suffered the severest losses and wounded. They had the largest area and the hardest fight. Their attacking zeal knows no limit. They make little preparation for fire support missions. Major Nieder on the other hand, prepared carefully, and set his fire missions thoroughly.<sup>48</sup>

In the question of propaganda the case of Operation Nasses Dreieck appears to describe the situation to its fullest absurdity:

From the villages of Oschitki, Nowosselki, Tschernin und Ssuwid, Bodenki, Shukin, 90% of the inhabitants all the farm animals and equipment fled to the forest. The bandits had time to bluff the people to flee. Our strength was overestimated. The bandits believed that we had 2,000 Cossacks and several regiments. The population is relieved that bandit pressure has been removed. Those in the woods returned and volunteered information. The reason for the rise in banditry was the failure of our own propaganda, that the civilians were to be slaughtered or sent to Germany, which would be worse than Siberia. Our propaganda failed. In Wypolsowo the Propaganda-Abteilung played music and distributed leaflets of pictures of the Führer etc. The inhabitants said if our propaganda had worked then Naumenko would never have been able to develop.<sup>49</sup>

#### Evaluation

A further report will follow, but here are the following details:

- a). Leadership and the troops worked well. Amongst the leaders, there were older officers who were unsuitable to the work and were used in the rear. The three group commanders were outstanding. Some units were not prepared but were still enthusiastic for the work. The men trained for this work were all under Major Nieder. Their morale and mood was very high.
- b). Cossacks worked well in both reconnaissance and the fighting. They ride fast and fight hard. They are the perfect troops for pacification. They were poorly clothed, but were encouraged by friendly words. They enjoyed it when the Propaganda Abteilung played Cossack songs one day.
- c). The search of the woods can never be successful as the bandits can run and hide. It needs large numbers of manpower to be able to encircle them.

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<sup>47</sup> BA MA, RL 20/302, *ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> BA MA, RL 20/302, *ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> BA MA, RL 20/302, *ibid.*

- d). The leadership in the wider spaces worked because the motivation was high. The number of forces worked well together and toward the success of the project. However, there were moments when the leader could only give orders to certain units at specific times.
- e). In future operations there must be pioneers (sapper engineers) present to rebuild bridges and remove mines otherwise precious time is lost.
- f). The police showed how useful they were in their handling of certain specific jobs.
- g). The collaboration between the local leaders and schoolmaster was excellent. They proved invaluable for the evacuation of civilians and the return of the cattle, at this time 2,000 cows.
- h). The Luftwaffe aerial reconnaissance was unsuccessful over the forests. It led to some mistakes. The Stuka attacks had a large morale effect but small material effect.
- i). This exercise proved that good reconnaissance, careful preparations, concentration of forces leads to success.<sup>50</sup>

Returning to Operation Nasses Dreieck again, the after action report made an assessment of the partisan losses. The report suggest that the majority of the partisans were killed in the fighting, with the majority dying in the last act in the swamp:

#### Bandit losses

In the period the 9th – 16th May approx. 1,200 Bandits and Bandit-helpers were shot, more than 50% during the attempt to break out of the swamp. If one adds to the large numbers shot by fighting in the morass of the swamp at least 800-1,000 were killed there. All the armed bandits had fled to the swamps and the prisoners had confirmed this. There are still single bandits who will try to escape under the protection of refugees. All persons in the woods will be thoroughly checked and if need be punished. According to the calculation, there was only a small amount of captured weapons, only 10 guns and other equipment. This is explained because the bandits were in the swamps and they either lost their weapons or buried them.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> BA-MA, RL 20/302, *ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> BA-MA, RL 20/302, *ibid.*

**Table 43: Final record for Operation Nasses Dreieck (1943)** <sup>52</sup>

Band Naumenko:	300 men	killed in combat 843
Band (Naumenko brother or sister):	250 man	200 killed in the swamp
Band Captain Spenatzki:	250 men	205 killed by the GFP
Ehemalige Cossack-Abt. 221:	250 men	
Total Killed:	1,248	
Returned animals:	2,000 cows	
	500 pigs	

Römer's report acknowledged that 843 partisans were actually killed in the fighting and 200 unaccounted for in the swamp. However, the reference to the GFP points to what happened to 205 suspects for helping the bandits, they were shot. All combat reports remained highly consistent recording acts of bravery, daring moments and occasionally certain situations that required some clarification. Throughout the whole of this research there was not one single report that suggested failure to achieve either the mission or to have been defeated by the partisans. Most reports reflect the high point in the fighting and then tail away usually as the enemy had been broken or overcome. Operation Nasses Dreieck was a case in point; the climax of the fighting was in the first couple of days, they were then followed by the clean-up action. A further report was made by a Luftwaffe Feldwebel regarding the process of security clearances. He stated that two Luftwaffe companies were involved in the clean-up action, and then finished the report with:

We had orders to kill persons over 5 years of age. We found a bunker in the forests. They were destroyed. On the 28th June 1943, 3 houses with Jews inside were set on fire. During this we sensed the Jews had munitions in the top floor, because there were explosions heard. On the 29th June we searched a larger area of forest because 50 bandits escaped. At 7.00pm the wood was encircled and the Luftwaffe companies began to search the wood. At 8.00pm the Luftwaffe and police had met and destroyed all the bandits.<sup>53</sup>

## VI. Summary

In earlier times there was no need for the term because the suppression of insurgency proceeded along the lines of 'kill them all, let God sort them out'. But once the time-honoured techniques of massacre and scorched earth ceased to be regarded as appropriate responses, 'hearts and minds' and other COIN [counter-insurgency] concepts came to the fore.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup> BA-MA, RL 20/302, *ibid*.

<sup>53</sup> BA-MA, RL 20/302, Kriegstagebuch 3 Kdr. Fl. Bau 4/XIII, Commander Oberst Altermann 1943.

<sup>54</sup> Holmes, 2001, pp231-232.

The SS applied a structure of occupation rather similar in style to that of von Trotha (territorial) rather than the older Etappe (rear-area). There was a fine balance in the deployment of forces. This was cost efficient policing. The SS-Police seemed to prefer to remain in control of the towns and major settlements, heightening their mobility. These operational studies have also shown that the army were not the only forces with a strategic and an operational concept. Similarly, it was not only SS that issued high command orders for the killing of women and children:

It is therefore not only justified, but it is the duty of the troops to use all means without restriction – even against women and children – as long as it ensures success.<sup>55</sup>

The operational concept of Bandenbekämpfung was on the one hand highly dynamic, based upon direct action, but on the other largely bureaucratic. This bureaucratic emphasis was significant from Bach-Zelewski's diary, which reflected his promotion.

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<sup>55</sup> NA, IMT UK-66, Chief Judge and Legal Advisor of High Command South, 1.1.43, p575.

### **Chapter Ten: Bandenbekämpfung - The Battalion Level**

I have been informed that a major resettlement operation is under way in the district of Bialystok. Roughly 40,000 Jews are to be evacuated from the Bialystok ghetto. In order to eliminate the last partisan strongholds remaining in the forests around Bialowitze [sic], the White Ruthenians living there – also about 40,000 people, predominantly peasants – are to be evacuated and transferred to the dwellings in Bialystok that used to house Jews. Because these are insufficient for the rural population, the additional housing shortage is to be alleviated by a wooden housing scheme, or barracks, with a capacity of 20,000 people....<sup>1</sup>

Since 1945, the history of the anti-partisan campaign has been overshadowed by Oskar Dirlwanger and Bronislav Kaminski. Both were noted for their personal cruelty, and for ordering their troops into conducting exceptionally brutal measures. These men and their troops have been regarded as exceptional. Later with Browning's study of a police battalion we were presented with another level of extreme behaviour, of seemingly ordinary men wantonly committing genocide. We actually require more examples of these battalion sized units to begin to build a more conclusive picture. We are reminded from chapter three that Bach-Zelewski had been ordered by Göring to 'cleanse' the Białowieża forests.<sup>2</sup> One month prior to the introduction of the Bandenbekämpfung directive, a Luftwaffe security battalion quietly moved into the Białowieża forests (refer to map 2, page 356). Its surviving records provide key evidence of how Bandenbekämpfung was routinely practised. The records also reflect the changing emphasis of the security tasks as missions were concluded. They also highlight the cooperation between all forces committed to security work. They also provide documentary evidence that the SS and Police were not alone in the practice of ruthless security measures.

This chapter now brings the analysis down to the tactical level. This is not meant to be a blow-by-blow account of Bandenbekämpfung. The balance of analysis is proportionate to the central tenants of this research. The purpose is twofold, firstly to illustrate how the focus upon large-scale operations has overlooked the daily routine of terror and coercion. The other concerns the motivation behind Bandenbekämpfung, not

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<sup>1</sup> Götz Aly, *Final Solution: Nazi Population Policy and the Murder of the European Jews*, (Oxford, 1999), p269-270, written on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 1943 by Albert Speer.

<sup>2</sup> In this chapter, for the sake of simplicity the German terms have been maintained in the translation of documents.



so much in individual zeal but how smaller units recorded their performance. This in part is intended to fill the gap caused by the absence of the larger part of SS Bandenbekämpfung unit papers. At the same time by focusing upon a unit from another institution, illustrates how far the Nazi security concept had become internalised.

## I. The Battalion

Under Directive 46 the Luftwaffe was taken into account alongside numerous paramilitary forces of the Nazi Party and national economic institutions:

### Auxiliary or Other forces

The arming of the Reichsarbeitsdienst (Reich Labour Service), Eisenbahntuppen (railwaymen security troops), Reichsforstamt (foresters), agricultural overseers, etc., will, where required, be improved. They should be able to defend themselves with the most effective weapons available.

The Luftwaffe, the mobilisation of the Reichsforstamt and the air force field forces... Commander-in-Chief Air Force will arrange for the transfer of Air Force establishments to the areas threatened by bandits, in order to reinforce the garrison in the Eastern territories.

The Luftwaffe provided formations from across its branches of service to assist and participate in Bandenbekämpfung. The level of commitment the Luftwaffe made included air force squadrons, the signal detachments and their own security battalions. To demonstrate a typical Luftwaffe security formation the following table is that of an airfield defence force:

**Table 44: Typical Luftwaffe Airfield Security structure (1944)<sup>3</sup>**

FORMATIONS	OFFICERS	CIVILIANS	NCO	MEN	HIWI	POW
Airfield Command Headquarters	5	6	31	55	10	13
Luftwaffe Signals E41/IV	1	-	21	42	-	-
Medical Company	2	-	21	42	-	-
26 Police Company	-	-	18	99	-	-
Staff Training Battalion 112/IV	3	1	5	5	-	-
1./Lw Training Battalion. 112/IV	1	-	27	97	-	-
2/Lw. Training Battalion 112/IV	1	-	27	129	-	-
Lw. Training Battalion Vehicles 18/IV	-	-	2	14	-	-
Lw. Training Battalion Vehicles 3/XVII	-	-	2	12	-	-
Total:	13	7	154	495	10	13

The Jägeronderkommando Bialowies der Luftwaffe (JSKB) was not typical of these formations but organised from Luftwaffe and Reichsforstamt personnel.<sup>4</sup> They

<sup>3</sup> BA MA, RL 21/243, Iststärke und Waffen der Fliegerhorsteinheiten. This appears to have been a typical complement for a Luftwaffe air station in the east.

<sup>4</sup> According to the DDSt, which keeps a full record of every unit that fought in the war the battalion was activated on 27 July 1942, as Sicherungsbataillon der Luftwaffe (originally formed as a security

arrived in the forests of Białowieża in July 1942, after leaving Rominten Heide and then driving from a depot in Gumbinnen. The battalion was controlled directly from Hermann Göring's personal office. Many initial reports by the JSKB's first commander Major Herbst frequently referred to the connections with Göring.<sup>5</sup> Further documentation confirmed evidence of Göring's continual control over the unit until its departure from Białowieża. Tessin has listed all German units down to company level.<sup>6</sup> He has made a cross sectional analysis of those German units posted to the Bezirk-Bialystok. The JSKB is not listed, nor are the Jagdkommandos des Reichsforstamts (JgKd), the hunters of the state forestry institution.<sup>7</sup> However, Tessin lists all those units in the area that the JSKB came into contact with. As a consequence, it is difficult to conclude with any certainty whether the JSKB was established on a 'normal' basis.

#### The Commanding Officers and Company Commanders

According to a handwritten entry in its war diary, the battalion had 31 officers serve between July 1942 and August 1944.<sup>8</sup> There was little to suggest why they were chosen for this battalion. The Luftwaffe officer corps was not uniform except within arm of service. There were only two commanders of the battalion. The first was Major des Reserve Emil Herbst, who survived the war but not his personnel papers. There is little evidence to determine the character or attitude of this man. On the 14 February 1943 he was replaced by Walter Frevert.<sup>9</sup> Herbst received the thanks and good wishes of the Reichsmarschall from Brauchitsch.<sup>10</sup> The second commander was Walter Frevert, who

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battalion). It was granted the Feldpostnummer L49006, directed to Luftgaupostamt Königsberg in East Prussia. In terms of chains of command the JSKB came under regional control of Luftgaukommando I. Between 1943 and 1944 the unit was then renamed Jägersonderkommando der Luftwaffe, Bialowies and was also given the new Feldpostnummer L53046. It was then described as a special independent light infantry detachment. The designation JSKB will be used in the rest of the chapter.

<sup>5</sup> BA MA, RL31/3, Kriegstagebuch des Sicherungsbataillon d. Lw. Bericht 6<sup>th</sup> August 1942. Moreover in the DDSSt there is a direct reference by a later battalion commander (Walter Frevert), who referred to the control arrangement back to Berlin and in particular with Göring's adjutant Oberst von Brauchitsch. In a further letter dated 27 August 1942, the Chief of Staff of Luftgaukommando I also referred to the same Colonel von Brauchitsch.

<sup>6</sup> Georg Tessin, *Verbände und Truppen der Deutschen Wehrmacht und Waffen-SS im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Erster Band: Die Waffengattungen-Gesamtübersicht, (Osnabrück, 1977).

<sup>7</sup> Tessin, *ibid*, p30. Tessin refers to a Luftwaffe Sonderkommando that was based in Rominten in 1944. This might have been a different formation or the reserve force based in the original depot.

<sup>8</sup> BA MA, RL/31-1, Kriegstagebuch Nr 1, Sicherungsbatl. d.Lw. Their diary references suggest they were called up relatively late, two in 1940, ten in 1941 and the rest in 1942.

<sup>9</sup> Andreas Gautschi, *Der Reichsjägermeister: Fakten und Legenden um Hermann Göring*, (Suderburg, 1999), p220

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p172. Gautschi suggested that Herbst's humanitarianism toward the inhabitants of Białowieża was commendable.

had begun the war as a reserve lieutenant (refer to *Dramatis Personae*).<sup>11</sup> On the 1<sup>st</sup> June 1943, his personal report was filed at the Luftwaffe headquarters in Bialystok. He was assessed as:

Very confident, clear headed and an active person with open character. He stands solidly within the National Socialist State's teachings. As an artillery-officer he participated in the Poland campaign and the commencement the Russia-offensive in 1941. He holds an extraordinary bodily physique and capability, as well as being very good mentally always with a fresh reserve of energy. He has his artillery experience. His experiences through occupation and the practice of Bandenbekämpfung have increased his skills. He has gained special infantry experiences that he did not have before. His special qualities are his independence, activity, and clear thought.<sup>12</sup>

On the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1943, he was promoted to Major of Reserve and commander of the JSKB. His last personnel report included such abilities as 'initiative' and 'improvisation'; as well as his National Socialism being beyond reproach.<sup>13</sup>

An interesting senior officer, Waldemar Nowarre, was a career policeman. On the 12<sup>th</sup> December 1940, his police area commander wrote the following assessment:

Nowarre has completed 11 years of service. He has conducted himself well during his whole term of service and he deals with figurative tasks, especially during manoeuvres, the solving of which gives him great contentment. He promises to be conscientious and an honest character; to the good officer judges he will become a member of the officer class as well as an outstanding officer candidate.<sup>14</sup>

In July 1941, he was transferred to Prag-Rusin, Luftwaffe ground troop officer candidate school, and on the 26 January 1942, Nowarre was commissioned. By October 1942, he had been assigned to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Security Battalion of the Luftwaffe (possibly in Austria) and then on the 13<sup>th</sup> March 1943, he was posted to the JSKB as a company commander.

The majority of the officers in the battalion were reservists, the Wehrmacht handbook provides some indication of their duties and how they were to prepare

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<sup>11</sup> BA ZNS, Wehrmacht officer file Walter Frevert.

<sup>12</sup> BA ZNS, Luftwaffe personnel file, Walter Frevert.

<sup>13</sup> Frevert survived the war and died in 1956.

<sup>14</sup> BA ZNS, Luftwaffe personnel file, Waldemar Nowarre. His record is testimony of the links between the Luftwaffe and the police first discussed in chapter two.

themselves.<sup>15</sup> The book covered the four main groups of Luftwaffe trades of flying, ground troops, flak and signals. They included regulations for dealing with uniforms, mobilisation and discipline. The handbook provided considerable advice on gas-warfare and attention to the organisation of troops. In the second section, entitled Waldkampf (forest fighting) the reserve officer was provided with some guidelines of fighting in wooded terrain.. They had to ensure that the artillery, machine-guns and mortars were coordinated or employed correctly within the restrictions of the terrain conditions. The main issue was the problem of security, reminding the reserve officer that fighting in the forest had its peculiar surprises. Description of tactics was simple, insisting upon swift deployment by the commander:

The larger forests:

The battalion commander must move swiftly! He demands: the reorganisation into narrow skirmish order of the security companies (to exploit and cope with the tracks and glades), subordinating command of heavy weapons and infantry guns to the security company. The heavy-machine guns are to be held in train in the reserve, in case single guns or trains of the artillery become involved in a fight; but first ensuring that total security exists prior to the moving of troops.<sup>16</sup>

### Organisation of the battalion

In Major Herbst's opening report from the Białowieża forest, he complained that there had been little support for the battalion or the tasks it was to undertake. Reporting his arrival in the forest area, he commented upon the poor quality and supply of transportation.<sup>17</sup> He arrived with only two companies without vehicles or heavy weapons. In table 45, the original size of the battalion is listed by each company. The first company was based in the town of Hainowka (with 2 officers, 22 NCOs, and 134 men), where its role was to secure the area, including the sawmills and the factories, and, to reinforce the strong points of the forest officials. The second company was based in the town of Białowieża (3 officers, 21 NCOs and 156 men); it was assigned to cover a series of strong points in Czolo-Zamosche and Popielewo areas. The battalion staffs were also based in Białowieża (2 officers, 6 NCOs and 51 men). The battalion was not

<sup>15</sup> Generalmajor Friedrich Ultrichter, *Der Reserveoffizier: Ein Handbuch für den Offizier und Offizieranwärter des Beurlaubtenstandes aller Waffen*, (Berlin, 1941).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p270. This handbook provided considerable advice on gas-warfare, detail on troop organisation but nothing on the management of civilians, Jews or partisans.

<sup>17</sup> BA MA, RL31/3, op cit, 6<sup>th</sup> August, 1942, Bericht 1.

alone in the area; there was already the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of 2<sup>nd</sup> SS-Police Regiment, a bicycle detachment, a bicycle squadron, four army Jagdkommandos of about 55 men, the 238<sup>th</sup> Landeschützenbataillon and four detachments of forest defence militia working in the forests.<sup>18</sup> There were numerous references to gendarmerie units in the area without providing any indication about which these were. Following discussions with the Quartermaster-General of the Luftwaffe and with General von Seydel, Chief of Staff of Luftgau Kommando Königsberg, a third company was raised and heavier weapons issued in September 1942.<sup>19</sup> The initial deployment of the battalion was:

**Table 45: Muster roll on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 1942**

FORMATION	OFFICERS	NCO	MEN
Staff	2	6	51
First Company	3	18	113
Second Company	3	19	123
Third Company	3	26	119
Total:	11	69	406

A picture of the size and development of the battalion between March 1943 and June 1944, taken from its war diary, lists its weapons and equipment in Table 46 below:

**Table 46: Muster roll of the JSKB (1943-1944)<sup>20</sup>**

DATE	OFFICERS	MEN	HORSES	PILOT	VEHICLES	MGS	RIFLES	HIWIS
						38/40	98k	
						MG15		
5.3.43	4	346	27	1	27	65	354	
21.3.43	4	329	27	1	27	65	354	
1.5.43	4	293	26	1	27	65	354	
21.8.43	5	367	27	1	34	97	454	215
11.10.43	8	525	28	1	34	97	446	206
10.11.43	14	621	69	1	33	97	446	204
21.12.43	8	603	68	1	33	97	462	
1.1.44	9	594	68	1	33	97	462	
1.2.44	6	599	68	1	33	97	462	
1.3.44	6	602	68	1	33	97	462	
10.6.44	7	615	69	1	36			

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, Bericht 1.

<sup>19</sup> At an unspecified time, but before December 1942 the battalion was supplied with a Fiesler Storch reconnaissance aeroplane and a pilot, plus a Luftwaffe signals detachment of 65 men.

<sup>20</sup> BA MA, RL 31/4, Kriegstagebuch, pp127 -128.

The battalion had two light artillery field guns which provided support. This commander was also gifted with an air reconnaissance capability, a Fieseler Storch and pilot. The increase of the battalion to over 600 men was paralleled by the introduction of more horses. Most noticeable is that although the unit was in Poland far from the frontlines it still managed to employ over 200 HIWI (almost a third of the German contingent). The Luftwaffe tactical signals detachment is listed in Table 47, contained a central communications station and was supplied with backpack field radios for tactical operations:

**Table 47: Signals detachment attached to the JSKB <sup>21</sup>**

DATE	OFFICERS	NCO/ MEN	5 WATT SENDER	ELECTRICAL SENDER	RADAR	SWITCH- BOARD 52	MIDDLE PHONE	RADIO PHONES	RADIO BACKPACKS	BICYCLE-	GRENADE	MGS	RIFLES	INSTRUMENTS	VEHICLES
												38/40	98k		
5.3.43	1	65	9	1		1	2	51		1	-	10	62	9	16
21.3.43	1	64	9	1		1	2	51		1		10	62	9	16
1.5.43	1	64	9	1		1	2	51		1	-	10	62	9	16
21.8.43	1	63	9	1	4	1	2	51		1	-	10	62	9	13
11.10.43	1	62	9	1	4	1	2	51		1	-	10	62	9	13
10.11.43	1	64	9	1	4	1	2	51		1	-	10	65	9	12
21.12.43	1	57	9	1	4	1	2	68	10	1	-	10	64	9	7
1.1.44	1	65	9	1	4	1	2	68	10	1	65	10	64	9	7
1.2.44	1	65	9	1	4	1	2	68	10	1	65	10	64	9	7
1.3.44	1	62	9	1	4	1	2	68	10	1	65	10	64	9	7
10.6.44	1	61	9	1	4	1	2	68	10	1	65	10	64	9	7

At the company level, troops were dispersed across strong points, with varying numbers ranging from 20 to 100 men as guards. The second company formed a mobile detachment operating as the rapid reaction group (or as a mobile reserve).<sup>22</sup> Gradually the battalion formed the classical German army posture for security duties in keeping with the old Imperial Etappe. Patrols were regulated into a daily routine. There were no complaints by Major Herbst of his men or the battalion's performance. On the 27<sup>th</sup> August 1942, requests for clarification of the battalion's status vis-à-vis the other units in the area were passed to Brauchitsch from Luftgau-Königsberg.<sup>23</sup> A fourth company was raised in October 1942 and rapidly followed on the 22 November 1942, by the 5<sup>th</sup>

<sup>21</sup> BA MA, RL 31/4, Luftwaffe signals troop, pp146-148.

<sup>22</sup> BA MA, RL31/3, Bericht 2 of 17<sup>th</sup> August 1942.

<sup>23</sup> BA MA, RL31/3, letter from Luftgau I (chief of staff) to Colonel von Brauchitsch, 27<sup>th</sup> August 1942. The report paid particular praise for the training and weaponry of the army's Jagdkommandos (55 men armed with machine-pistols and flamethrowers).

and 6<sup>th</sup> Companies. Both companies had 140 men and 25 NCOs, while the former had one officer and the 6<sup>th</sup> two officers.<sup>24</sup> With the change of command, the JSKB also changed. The JgKd of the Reichsforstamt under the Oberforstamt, headquartered in Białowieża, were formally assigned to support the battalion. There were nine Reichsforstamt bureaus in the main towns of the forest. Further support came from the Forstschutzkommandos (Forest Defence Commandos) of which there were three sections. Finally there was the Labour Office Leader (Abteilungsführer) with an undisclosed number of men based in Białowieża.<sup>25</sup> The tactical deployment of the battalion illustrates its positional security tasks:

**Table 48: Battalion tactical deployment (March 1943)<sup>26</sup>**

	OFFICERS	NCO	MEN		OFFICERS	NCO	MEN
	Strong points JSKB			Jagdkommandos (attached to JSKB)			
1 Company:	2	15	52				
Hainowka	1	13	34	'Elch' (Elk)	1	2	18
Topily							
Königsbrück				'Keiler' (Boar)	1	2	18
2 Company:	3	17	82				
Narewka	1	12	37	'Fuchs' (Fox)	1	2	18
Lewkowo				'Kranich' (Rabbit)		2	13
3 Company	2	15	63				
Under Bialowies				'Falke' (Hawk)		2	13
4 Company	1	19	91				
Czereszow	1	5	4	'Sperber' (Sparrowhawk)		3	13
Bienwald		1	7	'Geier' (Vulture)	1	2	13
				'Wildkatze' (Wildcat)	1	2	18
5 Company							
Rosocheck		8	1	'Jaguar'		3	18
Dobro				'Luchs' (Lynx)		2	18
Niemerca		1	9	'Panther'		2	18
6 Company:	1	20	89				
Murawa	1	11	19	'Buzzard'		3	18
Haleny		1	9	'Reiher' (Heron)		2	16
Wielko-Sioło		1	9	'Burger'		1	16

## II. The 6<sup>th</sup> Company

The 6<sup>th</sup> company, joined the battalion in November 1942. The only surviving records of the battalion come from this one company. The personnel lists of the 6<sup>th</sup> Company of the Luftwaffe came principally from the Deutsche Dienststelle in Berlin. There are three interesting aspects to these records: the age profile of the men, where they came from in

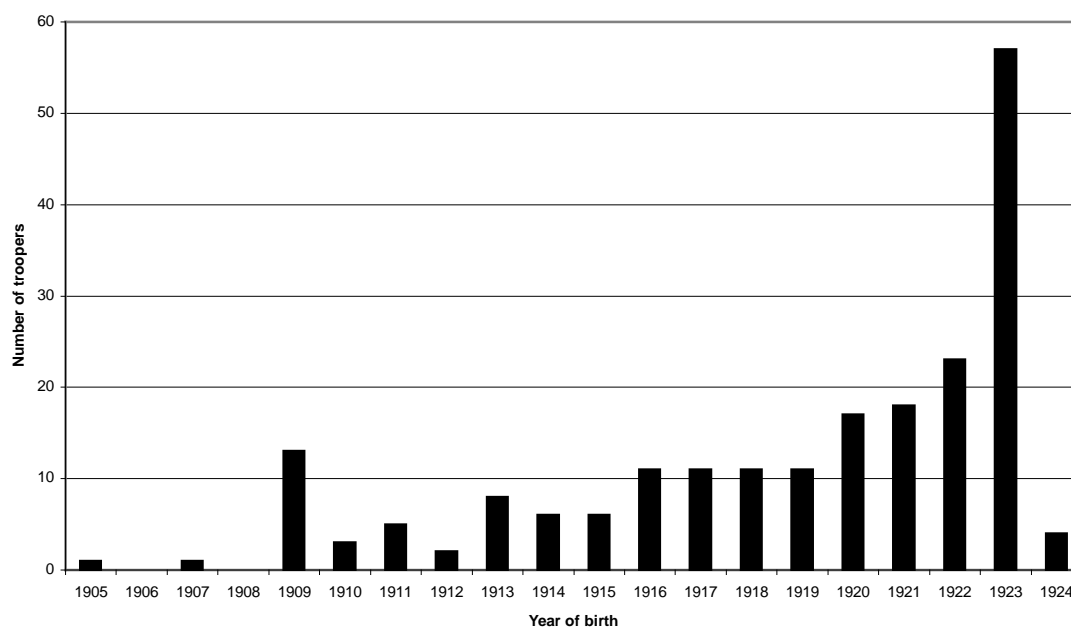
<sup>24</sup> BA MA, RL31/3, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1942, Bericht 10.

<sup>25</sup> BA MA, RL31/5, 6<sup>th</sup> March 1943.

<sup>26</sup> The units attached to the JSKB in this table were the Reichsforstamt JgKd.

Germany and their initial enlistment trade, or the unit they were transferred from. The age profile in Diagram 10 highlights the relative youth of this company. It is difficult to assess whether this was truly representative of the entire battalion but it provides an interesting picture. Given the nature of the manpower problem, it is fascinating to note that youthful German manpower was committed to this kind of rear area work. The men came from a variety of trades within the Luftwaffe ground troops. The evidence suggests the employment of these troops in anti-partisan operations was a means of introducing them into combat prior to full frontline duty, ‘blooding’ the men against real, live opponents. One reason for this suggestion was the fact that the men of the 6<sup>th</sup> company all appeared to take up frontline duties after their six-month spell in Bandenbekämpfung.

**Diagram 10: The age profile of the 6<sup>th</sup> Company<sup>27</sup>**



### The Officers

The commander of the company was Senior Lieutenant Konrad Felssner who had been born in Offenhausen in September 1909 (aged 33). Felssner, who had come from a ground troop training school, is distinguished in the files for having absolutely no other reference of him. The only officer file of the 6<sup>th</sup> company to have survived is that of Rudolf Nerke, born 24 April 1907, in Ratibor. He was a Catholic; his father was a

<sup>27</sup> DDSt, lists of the 6<sup>th</sup> company, Sonderkommando as at January 1943.



Konrektor the second most senior person in a school. Nerke had followed the normal pattern of schooling for an engineer, after attending Gymnasium he went to Ingenieur-Akademie. His career had begun as an Oberstfeldmeister in the Reichs Labour Service (RAD). His entry date for the Luftwaffe was March 1938, when he was assigned to the 10<sup>th</sup> Company, 13<sup>th</sup> Flak-Regiment. Nerke experienced a rapid rise through the ranks having served as NCO, and Wachtmeister, and in May 1941, becoming an officer. The following report declared:

Nerke is a conscientious soldier with stable character and good general-education. He is energetic and purposeful, as well as independent in the structuring and handling of tasks. His seniors regard Nerke as sure and reliable. As a comrade his seniors respect him. His soldierly stance is good, his physical education is sufficient. He has a good appearance. His flak-artillery skills and expertise are in, general good. His position on National Socialism is positive, he understands and accepts the ways of National Socialism. Nerke's promotion to war reserve-officer is both suitable and unrestricted.<sup>28</sup>

However, Nerke found himself in trouble when he came back several days late from leave, which was a serious offence. Over the next months, he was allowed to continue as a serving officer but only under sentencing from the courts martial, interrupted by war:

The judgment of the 19th November 1941 is removed. Nerke had led the 37mm section in the winter battles under the severest conditions with ability. Nerke had dishonoured himself by the considerable delay in returning from leave, without reason, is allowed to return to his battery on the 29th January 1942. Any further prosecution has been left with the department in question.<sup>29</sup>

On the 30 June 1942, there was a further interim judgement:

The acting department leader has made the following decision: Nerke is to serve his term of imprisonment for the purpose of probation in a Field-Regiment. In 6 months a further detailed judgment is to be submitted.

Thus, as the means of serving his punishment, Nerke joined the 6<sup>th</sup> company of JSKB. On the 25th February 1943, the 6<sup>th</sup> company commander Konrad Felssner gave him the following assessment:

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<sup>28</sup> BA ZNS, Luftwaffe personnel file, Lieutenant Nerke, 24<sup>th</sup> May 1941.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, from a court martial judgement of the 1<sup>st</sup> February 1942.

Mentally alert, circumspect and lively in a practical way. Solid, resolved character, slim shape, deft physique however, in the field, he gives the impression of tiring, having to be led back with stomach cramps. His physical potential is thereby decreased. Nerke is Flak-officer and has in a short time become skilled in the techniques of the infantry. His appearance before the front is positive and decisive. His seniors and subordinates bring him into the circle of comradeship and he pays attention to his subordinate's welfare. He uses his own initiative and talent for improvisation. He stands with the National Socialist way and gives great thought to it.

### The men

The 6<sup>th</sup> company had five senior non-commissioned officers. The senior NCO was Hauptfeldwebel Heinrich Peithmann, who was born in Wagenau on the 27 December 1912. Peithmann was assisted by four young sergeants. They in turn were assisted by a further 20 junior NCOs. The eldest was Paul Gregor who was born on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 1909, in Danzig and the youngest Rudolf Partsch born in Freudenthal in February 1920. No NCO personnel files have been located. There were very few professional soldiers; in other words men who joined for more than twelve years. The volunteers mostly volunteered for short periods of service in a branch of the armed forces. A large number were under age requiring parental permission. There was little evidence of affiliation to any Nazi party organisations that a young man's fascination with war was a primary reason for volunteering.

Case HAU-19/1/25/5 joined the Luftwaffe in Oberhausen in the Rhineland.<sup>30</sup> He was born on the 7<sup>th</sup> October 1919 in Duisburg. His father was a waiter and he had one brother and two sisters. A catholic, he attended the state Volksschule. His 1934 school report said he was a busy, well behaved student, who possessed a love for order (Ordnungsliebe). He did well in all subjects and then took up an apprenticeship as a locksmith. From the 24<sup>th</sup> April of 1934 to the 13<sup>th</sup> November 1937, he worked for a company in the Saar who gave him a very good reference. He had accepted his life as a locksmith and his overall performance was good. While working for his apprenticeship he attended the Berufsschule Oberhausen (apprentice school) where he took some entrance tests on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1937. His schooling was not fully completed as he volunteered under his father's agreement in 1937. On the 20<sup>th</sup> September 1937, he signed the papers to declare he was not Jewish and had no family members who were

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<sup>30</sup> Under existing German laws of privacy the name of men still alive have to be withheld.

Jews. During his basic training he was taught to use the pistol, a machine-gun and the standard issue rifle. In 1939 he was transferred to the reconnaissance forces in Münster. Between the 25<sup>th</sup> November 1939 and the 14<sup>th</sup> December 1940, he served in a motorised reconnaissance squadron based in Radom, assigned to security duties under the General-Government of Poland. From the 17<sup>th</sup> November to the 13<sup>th</sup> December 1941, he attended an NCO training course.

This serviceman served in a variety of units including volunteering to become a combat pilot. On the 28<sup>th</sup> February 1942, the officer commanding the candidates school completed a report on his results. He was declared to have over average intelligence, single-mindedness, to be thorough, and determined. His character was said to be energetic, but quiet, not too strong willed, obedient and with the potential for leadership. However, the detailed medical examination during his basic training, declared that he was suffering from phimose.<sup>31</sup> It was recommended that he should become an aircraft radio operator. He was tested for his potential in parachute training prior to undertaking flying school. It was not stated what had happened but in keeping with offering capable candidates an option, the subject chose aircraft engineering. He joined the 6<sup>th</sup> Company of a Luftwaffe security battalion in Poland in October 1942 and was transferred out on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1943 (this was the typical length of duty with the company in Białowieża).

The process of promotion to NCO was quite bureaucratic and the papers showed long courses for promotion in excess of several months. One typical example was case number HH-18/6/2/5, a man born in Bielefeld, 22 August 1918. He attended Lenzinghausen Protestant Volksschule and then becoming a silk-weaver. He was single, 171 cm tall and served with the Reichsarbeitsdienst (Reich Labour Service-RAD) between 2nd February 1938 and May 1939. During this time he signed the papers confirming there were no Jews in his family on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1938. He was assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> company, 10<sup>th</sup> Flying Training Regiment, in Neuhubren. His training included the rifle 98K, the machine-gun 15 and the pistol. He volunteered to become a Fallschirmjäger (paratrooper) but he failed the tests. From the 26th August 1940 to 26th October 1940, he attended the Unteroffizier-Anwärter-Lehrgang 8/40 in Heiligenbeil. The course commander wrote in the report of his performance:

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<sup>31</sup> He suffered from a tight foreskin. It seems the German medical profession were not prepared to perform circumcision even on behalf of the medical needs of the patient.

Honest, modest, very obliging, average build, slim, mentally ponderous and tough. Speaks and shouts quite well, loud and clear. He began badly but in all areas he has improved. Educationally inadequate, but acceptable for that of an NCO candidate. Suitability as an NCO: approved.

All the men without exception signed the proclamation that they had no Jewish relatives in their family. One case, Individual HWT-19/1/74/10, born on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 1919 in Bochum to a Catholic family. His father was a health worker and he had a brother and sister. He became a laboratory technician but on the 6 January 1940 he was sent to an airfield unit based in Köln-Julich as a professional Luftwaffe soldier. We know little of his training or experience, but we do have a great deal about his racial attributes because in 1942 he wished to get married. Both he and his future wife filed a completed Aryanisation form (marked 1933) and she was made to declare her Aryan status prior to their marriage in 1942. The problem stemmed from his great grandmother being Italian and the Luftwaffe wanted to ensure he was free of Jewish blood. This problem only arose because his forthcoming marriage. He joined the 6<sup>th</sup> Company on the 14<sup>th</sup> October 1942, remaining in Poland until the 6<sup>th</sup> March 1943.

What does this mean? The general conclusion was that the security demands had led to some scraping of the barrel for available manpower. There was a fine balance between the conscripted and the volunteers. The volunteers had applied for flying duties or to join the parachute forces. On average, the majority of men had had a normal schooling at a Volksschule. There were three examples of university-level scholars with professional careers who had failed officer training. A large number of men had primary schooling but were tested for their literacy. This entire group came from families who were farm labourers. The men had a reasonable proficiency with firearms. They experienced the same basic training in the use of the 98k rifle and were then later assigned to specialist training, especially in radio operation, if educationally suited. Two of the men had served military prison terms for misdemeanours, one for drunkenness and one for insulting behaviour to an officer.

### **III. Bandenbekämpfung**

The principal anti-partisan tactics employed by the Germans were a combination consisting of maintenance of strong-points to guard vital roads and railways, plus occasional large-scale efforts to reduce the partisan forces by encircling and combing their forest strongholds. The towns were

garrisoned by security troops, with posts set up at intervals along the roads. Small mobile units patrolled the roads, or went to the assistance of strongpoints under attack. Ordinarily these defensive measures, combined with an efficient system of repair, were adequate to keep open the lines of communication, but they could not prevent isolated breaks in the road and rail system, nor could they avert sudden concerted traffic interference over a wide area, but they could prevent protracted interdiction of movement. While the Germans were unwilling to assign more than a restricted number of second-rate security troops to permanent anti-partisan operations, they could at times afford to detach sizeable numbers of front-line troops for brief operations. Given the objective of security of communications rather than the pacification of the country, the combination of tactics the Germans employed was not in itself a bad means of reducing partisan damage with minimum resources.<sup>32</sup>

The initial reports written by Major Herbst suggest that there was a high level of planning prior to the deployment of the battalion, and its mission. The main purpose of the battalion was to handle the problem of bandits in the forest and sweep clean (Säuberung) the whole area.<sup>33</sup> Its primary mission was to ensure the safe and efficient resettlement of the forest, the evacuation of 'potentially dangerous' people and the racially impure. It also seems that the unit was intended to protect visiting dignitaries who wished to hunt in the forest. There was also the shadow mission of being the Reichsmarschall's representative in an area increasingly becoming an SS-Police reservation. Herbst reiterated his mission in a letter to the Berlin Gestapo in September 1942, 'I am under the command of the Reichsmarschall in the forest area of Białowieża conducting Bandenbekämpfung.'<sup>34</sup>

There are several points in his first report in which Herbst makes it clear that he had instructions to implement National Socialist policies. Herbst tells us that the partisans are Russian and that they are fighting a group that refer to themselves in their propaganda leaflets as the 'commanders of the forest'. He commented that there had been incidents with the partisans almost from the outset, with some severe firefights. He points out that the JSKB had also come to assist the Reichsforstamt; they were already working in the area. He passed comment on the Army and SS representatives who he had made contact with in Bialystok. There were many Bolsheviks and Bolshevik functionaries in the area and these were to be hanged. Although there were comments in

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<sup>32</sup> Simpson, 1976, pp43-44.

<sup>33</sup> BA MA, RL31/3, *ibid*, 17<sup>th</sup> August 1942.

<sup>34</sup> BA MA, RL31/3, letter from Herbst to the Gestapo Headquarters Berlin, 1<sup>st</sup> September 1942

the files on prior actions, one wonders how these so-called political agitators had not already been executed. He requested confirmation from the Reichsmarschall on how the various units should be co-ordinated so as to prevent any further confusion.<sup>35</sup>

However, the central mission was the evacuation of the existing civilian population and the colonisation of the area. The evacuation plan had been prepared in advance, the battalion was sent to ensure this process was completed with the minimum fuss. The final comment of Herbst's first report stated that they would be soon ready for the clearing (Säuberung) action.<sup>36</sup> The deportation programme had clearly been discussed prior to the units' arrival. The first reference to deportations was in Herbst's first report:

In an agreement with the Oberforstverwaltung and the Vertreter der Zivilbevölkerung, Amtskommissar Scharfenorth, an evacuation plan has been thoroughly prepared. I suggested that the remaining civilian population in the forest needed to be protected against the partisans and thereby prevent the partisans using them as unwilling sources of supply. The overall numbers of the population to be evacuated, including the outlying precincts, covers an area not under 200 km. We are capable of managing this. The partisans will withdraw having less possibility for shelter in single little farmsteads and settlements.

The absurd clearances in earlier years into the forest area has weakened the local land economy and led to a suitable clearing of trees. The evacuation in this area was transmitted during the journey from Berlin to Oberforstmeister Wagner and if necessary Herr Reichsmarschall will confirm the evacuation plan to proceed.<sup>37</sup>

Clearly much of the planning had already been conducted well before the battalion had moved to Białowieża. This conforms to the main requirements of Nazi security policy of exploitation and the preparation of territories for Lebensraum.

There was also a local problem of authority that emerged very early on and cannot be resolved or explained through the files. The question of immediate field authority was clearly a subject of serious discussion at the time. In a letter dated the 24<sup>th</sup> August 1942 from Forstmeister Krause the problem was clearly described:

For some weeks a security battalion of the air force has been placed in the

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<sup>35</sup> BA MA, RL31/3 Anlage 2, Kriegstagebuch Sonderbataillon d. Lw., Berichte, Nr1, 6<sup>th</sup> August 1942.

<sup>36</sup> BA MA, RL31/3, *ibid*, 31<sup>st</sup> August 1942, Bericht Nr.3.

<sup>37</sup> BA MA, RL31/3, Anlage 2, zum Kriegstagebuch des Sicherungsbataillon d. Lw, Bericht Nr1, p4.

forest of Bialowies under the leadership of Herr Major Herbst. He is under the direct command and has extensive authority from the Herr Reichsmarschall, to provide overall protection in the forest. He should attempt to bring the military and the civilian services to work together.

In reality there is however a current of confusion because besides the air force, there are police, Landeschützen, Reichsbahn security troops, individual hunting squads of the army and a bicycle squadron and so on. While in the forest the bandits have started the conflict... It is only regrettable that an integrated leadership of these units could not be reached until now.

The police are sent into the middle of the forest without the knowledge of the air force. This naturally is an extremely untenable situation. The Oberforstamt is not told of the employment of these new police battalions with any formal word given and only through coincidence can we discover their actions. Even today we discover that in the middle of the forest the police have set up field stations.<sup>38</sup>

The change of command in March 1943 did not change the mission. Orders to Frevert once again came from the Reichsmarschall: 'On the 3 May 1943: Special mission of the pacification and evacuation of the Białowieża forests on behalf of the Reichsmarschall.'<sup>39</sup>

### Tactical level operations

The first phase of operations began in July 1942 and ended in March 1943, when Herbst was posted to other duties. From the beginning the battalion was involved in a regular routine of security duties against incursions into their designated forest areas. From the 30<sup>th</sup> July to the 5 August 1942, they arrested 35 persons, of which 32 were shot and the remaining three kept for interrogation. A further seven prisoners were detained. On the 17<sup>th</sup> August the battalion recorded the names of three of its victims. Herbst initially planned skirmish attacks against the partisans with larger operations later. From his earliest observations he believed that larger actions against the partisans might be betrayed, but he did not explain why. A person described as a Weissrussische Jäger Nicolai Protasewitsch from Lugi-Brod was shot, while a local railway worker Barmuda and his wife from the forest were both hanged. They were suspected of contacting the partisans. The rest of the report was a little less personal as it detailed actions and

<sup>38</sup> BA MA, RL31/3 1942-1943 Anlage 2 zum Kriegstagebuch des Sicherungsbataillon d. Lw. Bericht 2 of 17<sup>th</sup> August 1942.

<sup>39</sup> BA ZNS, Personnel file of Walter Frevert, Sonderauftrag des Reichsmarschall zwecks Befriedung und Evakuierung des Urwaldes Bialowies.

killings. The essence of the report was short fire fights, brief encounters with persons trespassing or not having the correct documents and the inevitable killings. There were twelve arrests on the 8<sup>th</sup> August, which led to the shooting of seven, the hanging of three more and two being held for questioning. However, on the 13<sup>th</sup> August, they captured 22 'Bolsheviks'. The following day they were all publicly shot with other victims:

**Table 49: Executions through shooting (August 1942)<sup>40</sup>**

NO.	NAME	FIRST NAME	HOME	GROUND FOR SHOOTING
1	Fenke	Piotr	Saulek Nr.2	Bolshevik.
2	Newerowitsch	Sergiej	Browsker Weg	Bolshevik.
3	Diatel	Alexander	Browsker Weg	Bolshevik.
4	Podlaschtschik	Leon	Podolany	Bolshevik.
5	Schpakowitsch	Roman	Brows A 6	Bolshevik. (Agent of the N.K.V.D.)
6	Schpakowitsch	Sergiej	Stotzek 228	Director (Agent of the N.K.V.D.)
7	Schpakowitsch	Maxim	Stotzek 234	Saboteur
8	Stankiewitsch	Juljan	Baracke	Bolshevik acting as an agent provocateur
9	Radkiewitsch	Wladimar	Zastawa 81	Active N.K.V.D. agent
10	Buszko	Michael	Zaulek	Active Bolshevik
11	Lickiewicz	Justyn	Podolany 28	Bolshevik Propaganda worker
12	Buczel	Alexander	Zastawa 154	Bolshevik agitator
13	Grabowski	Micheal	Tropinka 80	Bolshevik agitator
14	Zorin	Wlodimir	Stoczek 197	Bolshevik agitator
15	Wolkowycski	Alexander	Zastawa 144	Bolshevik agitator
16	Dron	Ignatz	Tropinka	Bolshevik agitator
17	Kuwszynow	Dimitry	Krzyze 20	Bolshevik Under cover
18	Szpac	Helene	Waldkolonie 31	Wife of a German Communist, spy and saboteur
19	Rudzki	Kasmir	Grudki	G.P.U. Agent
20	Kozlowski	Stanislaw	Forstr. 83	Nationalistic Pole – political agitator
21	Kozlowski	Marianna	Forstr. 83	Nationalistic Pole – political agitator

In the same report, Major Herbst recommended the intervention of the RFSS to help to systematically terminate all Bolshevik activities in the rural area.<sup>41</sup>

Major Herbst maintained a broad reporting procedure for all activities in the area on behalf of his file system. On the 25<sup>th</sup> August 1942, he reported on the preparations for 'Sonderaktion der Polizei' in Bialystok. The action was commanded by Major General Müller (BdO Königsberg) and conducted in coordination with actions carried out by SS-Obergruppenführer Jeckeln, SS-Obergruppenführer Prützmann. It was planned to begin 1<sup>st</sup> September 1942, (which puts paid to any idea that SS actions were secretive or conducted without prior Wehrmacht knowledge). Interestingly, Major Herbst had contacted Müller and was well prepared for the start of the action and any impact upon his area.<sup>42</sup> On the 28<sup>th</sup> September, Operation Wald Sipurka took place, in

<sup>40</sup> BA MA, RL31/3, 14<sup>th</sup> August 1942.

<sup>41</sup> BA MA, RL31/3, Bericht Nr2, 17<sup>th</sup> August 1942.

<sup>42</sup> BA MA, RL31/3, Bericht, Nr.3, 31<sup>st</sup> August 1942.



which it was revealed that Herbst had his own Fieseler Storch, which he used for tactical reconnaissance. The forces employed were a mixture of two battalions from an SS-Police Regiment, a commando detachment from the Police battalion and a security detachment from the Luftwaffe airfield in Bialystok.<sup>43</sup>

The first official action of the 6<sup>th</sup> Company took place on the 6<sup>th</sup> January 1943, when two of its JgKds participated in a fire fight and shot 3 partisans. On the 31<sup>st</sup> January 1943, the 6<sup>th</sup> company killed 3 Jews, allegedly trying to run away. On the 8<sup>th</sup> February, they shot another Jew again trying to escape, on that day two JgKds working with the 6<sup>th</sup> company shot three bandits in the forest. They captured several Russian weapons. On the 12<sup>th</sup> February, it participated in a mobile tactical operation with the 5<sup>th</sup> company in which all the vehicles of both companies' transport were used in the area of Ur-Krywiersz. They came across a large partisan camp from which 16 Jews were reported shot while running away. There is no evidence of weapons, a fire fight or any other casualties. They captured a small cache of arms.

In static duties, the 6<sup>th</sup> company controlled three security posts of Murawa (1 officer, 11 NCOs and 19 men), Haleny (1 NCO and 9 men) and Wielko-Siolo (as with Haleny). It worked with three Reichsforstamt JgKds code-named 'Buzzard', 'Reiher' (Heron) and 'Bürger' (Citizen). Each JgKd had roughly 3 NCOs and 18 men.<sup>44</sup> However, static security was only one duty amongst a multiple of methods employed. The JgKds patrolled their designated area and on the 18<sup>th</sup> February 1943, they are recorded in one such patrol:

The JgKds 'Heron' and 'Citizen' of the 6th company worked together and combed the forest area of northern Samosze area 5, in sleigh-teams. On a wider front JgKds 'Buzzard' pushed on and discovered an active bunker with Jews who tried to leave the bunker. They opened fire and shot seven Jews, who tried to defend themselves with grenades. A part of the squad captured several escaped Jews. Of the four escaped Jews two or more were shot. In the bunker they found hand grenades and ammunition.<sup>45</sup>

On 21<sup>st</sup> December 1942, at 12.00hr, the Luftwaffe headquarters received a radio message. It confirmed that Senior Lieutenant Ciré (commander of the 4<sup>th</sup> Company) had distinguished himself by being the first senior officer of the battalion to be killed. A

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<sup>43</sup> BA MA, RL31/3, Aktenmark, über das Unternehmen Wald Sipurka am 28.9.1942.

<sup>44</sup> BA MA, RL31/3, standing orders for the 5<sup>th</sup> March 1943.

<sup>45</sup> BA MA, RL31/3, report of operations 13<sup>th</sup> February to 4<sup>th</sup> March 1943.

patrol in a Kübelwagen (small command car) had come across the bandits alleged to have killed Ciré and disposed of them. The bandits were carrying two machine-guns. The message continued that three Obergefreiter had been killed with Ciré and that his weapons, ammunition, Soldbuch, boots, and coat had been stolen. Alongside him lay the company bookkeeper, but no money had been taken.<sup>46</sup> The medical report stated that driving in his Steyr-Kübel, the company command car, he and the three men were ambushed and were literally sprayed by bullets.<sup>47</sup>

From the security standpoint, there was a mix between constant patrols, special missions, or ambushes. In report number 12 of the 5<sup>th</sup> January 1943, Herbst gave a breakdown and summarised the situation thus far, successes included the destruction of 55 camps, 20 bunkers, 185 partisans shot, 58 partisans hung for the loss of only 10 men and 5 wounded. Briefly covering the programme of resettlement he finished with congratulation for Göring's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. In his 15<sup>th</sup> report, Herbst stated that the fight against the partisans was increasing in intensity and that the 5<sup>th</sup> Company had shot 16 Jews on the 12<sup>th</sup> February 1943. The activities of the Reichsforstamt JgKds were also documented alongside the battalion. On the 5<sup>th</sup> January 1943, the JgKd 'Panther' discovered a bunker in the swamp, which was then destroyed. Also on the 5<sup>th</sup> January, the JgKd working with the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> companies killed 3 bandits and captured three rifles. On the 24<sup>th</sup> January, a member of the Forstschützenhilfe found two Jews, and they were shot attempting to run away. JgKd 'Jaguar' shot a Jewish person called Baruchlaucewicky in an area of the forest. On the 8<sup>th</sup> February, JgKd 'Keiler' found a bunker 5 metres by 6 metres in the forest ground. They were alarmed to find a 105mm mortar. JgKd 'Luchs' also on the same day found a potato filled bunker. On the 10<sup>th</sup> February the JgKd 'Bojary' destroyed a bunker and shot two partisans. JgKd 'Elch' found a partisan camp on the 13<sup>th</sup> February. A fire fight ensued and one partisan (the leader) was shot, the others escaped.

The second period under the command of Major Walter Frevert, between March 1943 and November 1944, saw a change of style in record keeping. There appeared to be a reduction in the number of evacuations, but a heightened ferocity in the descriptive style of reporting. Full-scale military operations with support from armoured units became a feature of this period. One of the first notes on file concerned the

<sup>46</sup> DDSt, pencil document on 1943 casualty file linked to the papers detailing the death of Lieutenant Ciré.

<sup>47</sup> DDSt, JSKB casualty records.

organisational structure of the battalion in March 1943. By then it had absorbed the Forstamt elements into its order of battle. Frevert provides us with a list of four companies, a heavy section and a signals unit. The whereabouts of the two missing companies is unclear. The JgKds had been absorbed as permanent company-based hunting teams. However, it seems reasonable to suggest that by this stage the whole of the Reichsforstamt officialdom had been activated. In addition three groups of Forstschützenkommandos were also brought to the JSKB reserve. Clearly, by 1943, the Luftwaffe and the Reichsforstamt in the forest had become a unified security force.

Up to this point, the nature of the casualties and the small number of deaths, disguised another, but more unpleasant horror, woven into the record. On the 8<sup>th</sup> May 1943, an incident took place that involved the men guarding Stützpunkt Radeck.<sup>48</sup> Recorded as death at the hands of enemies, Sergeant Rudolf Marteck of the second company and four comrades were hacked to death. Nine blade wounds killed Marteck. Private Erich Lunge, who was born in Kiel in 1923, was also hacked to death. Gustav Töpfer from Stykow had only just turned twenty-one when he suffered mortal blade wounds and two further stabbings in the upper chest. Karl Heinz Evers, born in Lemkenhufe in 1924, also from the second company, suffered a huge blow, a sharp instrument gouged him from his shoulder to the stomach, and killed him immediately. The same type of attack befell Oberjäger Rudolf Trabus, born on the 27<sup>th</sup> April 1920 in Berlin-Charlottenburg. Just two weeks after the incident mentioned above, he was also caught in the ambush. He was 23 years of age when was buried locally with his comrades in the Białowieża Heldenfriedhof.<sup>49</sup>

The signals company commander was Werner Beyrich, born 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1919, in Leipzig. A protestant (Evangelische), his father was a businessman.<sup>50</sup> He completed his schooling and passed his arbitur on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 1937. Beyrich was a schoolteacher by profession but was conscripted on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1937, as a private, and by 1940 had become a Reserve Sergeant. He had served in the RAD between April and October 1937. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 1940, he was promoted to Lieutenant of 1<sup>st</sup> Luftwaffe Signals

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<sup>48</sup> BA MA RL31/5, Senior Lieutenant Nowarre 10<sup>th</sup> May 1943 In the report of the 8<sup>th</sup> May 1943 it stated that at 18.30hr strong point Wielo-Solo warned the main radio station (Hauptfunkstelle) Bialowies that Sergeant Marteck with a JgKd ran into bandits and Sergeant Marteck and Oberjäger Trabus and three men were wounded. An alarm was raised at 18.55 and under the leadership of Senior Lieutenant Nowarre a reaction force arrived from Wielko-Solo at 20.05.

<sup>49</sup> DDSt, reported to the Fliegerhorstkommandant Bialystok 16<sup>th</sup> May 1943.

<sup>50</sup> BA MA RL31/5, report 6<sup>th</sup> March, page 3, confirms his position.

Regiment and became a radio team leader. By the 16<sup>th</sup> November, he was again promoted to Senior Lieutenant of a signals company, and was posted to Insterburg airfield under the station signals commander. His commander in Insterburg was Colonel Rutgers who wrote the following for his annual assessment form:

Beyrich has a decent open character and possesses a youthful fresh nature; throughout a reliable personality with a receptive mental disposition and tall slim appearance....He must appropriate himself with more experience with his men.....Since his promotion and his arrival he has taken an extensive involvement in tasks. His employment of National Socialism is positive his philosophy optimistic. His behaviour amongst senior officers is always correct. His subordinates understand and respect his seniority. Amongst his circle of comrades he is well liked. His ability to improvise and use his initiative is sufficient at this time.

By the 26<sup>th</sup> February 1943, he had become a company commander of the JSKB. On that very same day, Herbst described Beyrich with virtually the same words as Rutgers. On the 13<sup>th</sup> April 1943, Senior Lieutenant Werner Beyrich was seriously wounded in the forest four kilometres from Czermanov. He was to die of his wounds in II Reserve-Hospital, in Bialystok. Private Heinz Steinberg, a 26-year-old radio operator from Reval, was also killed in the same incident. They were buried together in Białowieża.<sup>51</sup> The incident was reported to the Wehrmacht record keeper in Bielsk, through the 461<sup>st</sup> Reserve Division in Bialystok. Beyrich as commander of the signal detachment had been on a patrol. As they came into contact with bandits, at 50 meters a fire fight began. He was caught in the firing and severely wounded in the thigh and stomach. Private Steinberg was killed instantly during the fighting. Beyrich was rushed to the reserve hospital and operated on during the night. It was noted that his condition was very serious. Subsequently, Senior Lieutenant Nowarre wrote on the file that on the 15<sup>th</sup> April Beyrich had died, whereupon he was buried in the Heldenfriedhof.<sup>52</sup>

On the 31<sup>st</sup> March 1943, NCO Trabus produced a hand-written report on the previous twenty-four hours' activities in the security area Topily, part of the forest. They had been attacked and surprised by at least 24 partisans. The Forstschützen, under Revierforster Klarmann, and two further JgKd, supported his platoon. After a brief fire fight the partisans dispersed. The Germans followed them into the woods. After a period

<sup>51</sup> DDSt, reported to the RLM on the 13<sup>th</sup> April 1943.

<sup>52</sup> BA MA RL31/5, letter from Herbst to the 461<sup>st</sup> Reserve Division, 14<sup>th</sup> April 1943.

of patrolling, they came across a small group of partisans one of whom was a woman with a rifle. Trabus stated that he attacked from 60 metres and the women with two men were shot down. He then went to ground and started firing with his machine pistol until the last of the partisans were wounded or killed. They found a wounded partisan who was dispatched by Trabus with shots from his MP38. They then discovered a camp where they found arms, ammunition and clothing.

A trend toward larger operations began to emerge while routine security continued. Whether there was a need for these types of operations or if this was becoming the standard form of Bandenbekämpfung practice, is unclear from the evidence. However, the attitude expressed within the company, toward the partisans, was still shown, 'Increase in activities by Bandits, many have rested in the winter in Bunkers or by living with women. There will be a combined operation between the SS, Police and Luftwaffe to seek and destroy these Bandits.'<sup>53</sup> The short sharp fights continued to occur at the least unexpected moment especially with small handfuls of partisans. On the 25<sup>th</sup> May 1943, what the Germans called 'bandit-scouts' made their first appearance:

On the way to the vehicles, the troop saw three bandits, and a fire fight started. One was shot, one badly wounded and we had no losses. Because these men were scouts for a stronger group of bandits, I stopped the action and sent a message to the JSKB.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> June 1943, Frevert, reporting the forthcoming Unternehmen Vattertag (Operation Fathers' Day), referred to the operational deployment:

1. First Battalion, 34th Police Regiment under Major Bartscht;
2. 200 men from Jagdkommando Bialowies [Białowieża] and a tactical company from Bialystok airfield security,;
3. Heavy weapons support from the 461st Reserve Division;
4. The Bialowies [Białowieża] Forstschutzkommando;
5. Two bombers (Messerschmitt ME 110) from Bialystok.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> BA MA, RL31/5, 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1943, Secret Orders from SSPF Bezirk Bialystok.

<sup>54</sup> BA MA, RL31/5, 1<sup>st</sup> June 1943, Captain Frevert, Tgb.Nr.102/43 geheim, Unternehmen Vattertag, p36

Also on the 1 June 1943, Lieutenant Spies (Luftwaffe) of JSKB filed an after action report, which opened:

On the 29th May 1943, at 20.30 hours, Oberjäger (private first class) Nonnig leading 3 men from his base unit approximately 1km north of the village of Okulniki, in the direction of the village of Bialy Lassak, suddenly noticed 5 Jews come out of the forest at point 791, above the fields set against the forest. He opened fire. Two of the Jews were shot in the back, the remaining three escaped presumably injured, into the cover of the forest. In entering the darkness, he could not pick out these three Jews for prosecution.

Summarising, the words of Spies: In the early morning (03.15), with Captain Frevert in command, along with 25 men they drove to Bialy Lassak. There they met with District Reichsforster Spie and 5 trackers to support a hunt from Bialy Lassak; the aim being to hunt down the Jews that had escaped. After a massive search of the woods without success, they found the tracks of the Jews on the leaves on the ground. They followed these tracks through the hunting areas 79, then area 789 and on to 788. There they discovered wide visible footprints. Lieutenant Spiess then fanned his men out to the right and left along a beaten path with 5 paces between them. They noticed in the dense undergrowth some dwellings and then the bunker. They immediately prepared themselves and threw hand-grenades inside. Upon entering they found one dead and a slightly injured 17-year-old, a Jew whom they interrogated. They also found three sacks of flour, one bale of hay, a poor quality leather coat and some other artefacts that they salvaged. The questioning of the 'still living Jew' led them to understand the bunker was the home of 16 persons, a couple with four sons in the ages of 15 to 25 years and some other relatives. 'The still living Jew was later shot'. Spiess signed the report.<sup>55</sup>

One trooper, from the 6<sup>th</sup> company, who was killed, left a surviving personnel record. Siegfried Adams was born on the 24 October 1916, in Elbersfeld. He was a protestant and had a good education attending the Wuppertal Oberrealschule. Upon leaving school, he began work as a Justizinspektor (junior member of the Justice department). He married on the 29<sup>th</sup> August 1938, the same year his father Rudolf died. His mother had died in 1923. Adams was 170 cm tall and weighed 54 kilos. On the 20<sup>th</sup> December 1936, he declared himself free of Jewish relatives or family members. This

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<sup>55</sup> BA MA, RL31/5, JSKB (6<sup>th</sup> March 1943 to 3 August 1944), Einsatzbericht für den 12<sup>th</sup> March 1943.

was done at the request of the police president of Wuppertal, as a member of the justice department. He entered the Luftwaffe on the 14<sup>th</sup> January 1940, joining the usual training company. His documents were passed to the army recruiting office. His basic training included the rifle, the MG13, and the pistol. Adams attempted, unsuccessfully, to become an officer. His service record shows that he spent most of his time in a clerical position in the Luftwaffe until 14<sup>th</sup> October 1942 when he joined the 6<sup>th</sup> Company. He had regularly received all his field inoculations. His service ended on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1943, but he was retained for a second period. In this time he was promoted to the rank of Oberjäger on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 1943. His Wehrstammbuch entry shows that he was killed on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 1943, serving in the forest, at Jagen 522, south east of Czerlonka. He had been shot through the neck by machine pistol fire from bandits and was buried in the Heldenfriedhof in Białowieża.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> October 1943, the JSKB carried out Operation Charki, conducted by 130 men from the battalion with an additional 35 Hiwis. A combat team from the Hermann Göring Panzer Division was also attached. This was the first reference to the Hiwis being involved in combat alongside the Germans, and what is known of the Hiwis is discussed later. They were all carrying light weapons, machine pistols and rifles. Some of the men were driving in small vehicles. The area of combat was Białowieża, Königsbrück, Kaminiec and Litewsk. The idea was to form a curtain and run the partisans into the middle of a swamp. Armoured units were made available and would be called up through the radio net. Later reports stated that while the main German units were involved in action, the Hiwis manned the security posts. The numbers quoted suggest an overall figure of 70 Hiwis. We are unclear as to the outcome of the operation.

There are virtually no formal or specific references to the role of the Hiwis. There are mentions made of the HIWI in the diary but there is nothing to say who they were or where they came from. In March 1944 during the highest period of casualties, the papers also recorded two Polish Hiwis.<sup>56</sup> Hiwis were captured enemy soldiers employed by the German armed forces as servants and general employees. There is some evidence that Hiwis sometimes fought alongside German soldiers against their fellow countrymen. With regards to the JSKB we have three separate sources of evidence of

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<sup>56</sup> DDSt, JSKB casualty report number 13, 20<sup>th</sup> March, 1944.

their existence. The first was mentioned above, concerning Operation Charki. The other two came from separate casualty reports. The first casualty report referred to Paul Soldatow born on the 20<sup>th</sup> July 1924, in 'Siemienowka', 'Bielsk'. The other, Stefan Bielecki, from Hajnowka (spelt in Polish on a German army form!), was born 5<sup>th</sup> July 1924. They were wounded in a tactical operation on the evening of the 19-20<sup>th</sup> March 1944. Interestingly, the casualty report was marked with blue crayon and inscribed with auch Hiwi!! (also a Hiwi). Under the prevailing international laws of war that existed at the time, they were collaborators. On the 6 July 1944, at security point 'Ogrodniki, Urwald Bialowies' there appears to have been a serious incident. Ironically, this incident saw the largest number of deaths of men of the JSKB in any one action. This came about through pistol shots during the 'revolt of the Hiwis'. One German soldier was killed immediately, the other four died of their wounds in the field hospital in Bialystok.<sup>57</sup> The statement that there had been an 'uprising' of the Hiwis, with serious casualties, obviously suggests an armed revolt. The Hiwis were undoubtedly dealt with following the 'revolt'. However, they were not listed in the casualty reports nor mentioned in the war diary.

Through mid July to August 1944, this intensity in the fighting took on another shape as tanks and heavy guns became, routinely, involved. The JgKd were now fighting along real heavy troops; such as three Panther tanks from the 5<sup>th</sup> SS-Panzer Division, 'Wiking'. Seven Russian tanks in the area of Białowieża attacked them. They began forming into a Kampfgruppe as the tide of the war changed. In retreat they removed animals, Hiwis and civilians at the Russian approach.<sup>58</sup>

The behaviour of the soldiers on the march was very poor, because the NCOs were too weak to bring order into the columns. There were permanently sleeping soldiers, who could only be woken violently. They did not look after the horses properly.<sup>59</sup>

Gustav Rühm came into his own in the last reports of the JSKB. He organised and led a Kampfgruppe in combat against the Red Army. Rühm had been a professional forester who was conscripted by the Luftwaffe. He was unusual in that he also had a university degree and was a first class graduate in forestry economics. He was born in September

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<sup>57</sup> DDSt, JSKB casualty report number 16, 6<sup>th</sup> July, 1944.

<sup>58</sup> BA MA, RL31/5, report of the period 25<sup>th</sup> July 1944.

<sup>59</sup> BA MA, RL 31/5, in the general section of a report written 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1944.



1904, into a Catholic family; his father was a senior veterinary surgeon. Rühm became a Regierungs-Forstrat (Regional Forester). He was married with two children and his home was in Munich. Conscripted in August 1939, he became an officer cadet in May 1940 at the age of 36. He was assigned to the 5<sup>th</sup> Flak Regiment, apart of the home defence forces; he specialised in commanding a 20mm anti-aircraft gun battery. There is no evidence that he survived the war.

#### The resettlement programme of 1942

The deportations of local civilians began, as far as one can tell, in October 1942. A list of deportations for November 1942, Table 50, provides a summary of how many local Polish people were removed from the forests. Amtskommissar Scharfenorth, who met with Major Herbst, in July 1942, managed the civil authority that supervised these operations.<sup>60</sup> In report number 8 of the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1942, Herbst referred to the planned evacuation of 20-40,000 persons in Bialystok over a period of 10 days. On the 30<sup>th</sup> October 1942, Herbst wrote a paper on the civilian community in the forest. He stated that it was the order of Göring to introduce complete resettlement for the area. He made it clear that housing had to be made available and the evacuated must leave with a few rations. In an undated paper, the guidelines for resettlement were laid down by the local department officials. The trucks and drivers were to be supplied by the Wehrmacht, all NCOs with driving licences. They were to be transported from Bialystok to Schupol. Female Polish and Russian speakers were to be added to the march. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1942 reference was first made to the removal of the Jews from Bialystok using the railways.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> December 1942, the new German bank, the Kreissparkasse, was opened in Białowieża to sustain the resettlement programme. We know little of the people who were moved into the forest or where they had come from. It is therefore only speculation to suggest this model of social engineering ever worked. A set of figures, Table 50, listed for the deportation of the forest, highlight how much resettlement intertwined with the work of pacification. One shows the numbers deported and the other shows how many properties were available for German immigrants.

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<sup>60</sup> BA MA, RL31/3, Anlage 2, zum Kriegstagebuch des Sicherungsbataillon d. Lw, Bericht Nr1.

However, it was not evacuation to pacify but to fulfil the racial engineering demands of National Socialist policy.

**Table 50: The forest communities and deportations.<sup>61</sup>**

NO.	NAME OF COMMUNITY	DISTRICT POPULATION	DEPORTED	HOUSEHOLDS	FARMS
1	Annapol	290	117	407	58
2	Bakuny	517	303	820	85
3	Chwalowo I	345	135	480	68
4	Chwalowo II	554	58	612	96
5	Haleny	266	240	506	73
6	Hryniewicze	214	54	268	50
7	Izbice	149	50	199	36
8	Leschajka	362	261	623	78
9	Lichosielce	597	495	1092	120
10	Mokre	293	323	616	59
11	Murawa	926	372	1298	192
12	Nowosiolki	641	147	788	131
13	Roubeck	1237	346	1583	224
14	Suchopol	714	430	1144	136
Total		7105	3331	10436	1406

**Table 51: Resettled into the State Forest.<sup>62</sup>**

I. Amtskommissariat Bialowies	Total	1,114 persons
Transported in:		
1. 6. 11. 42	446 persons	
2. 10. 11. 42	295 persons	
3. 16. 11. 42	373 persons	
II. Amtskommissariat Suchopol		1,212 persons
Transported in:		
1. 5. 11. 42	464 persons	
2. 11. 11. 42	399 persons	
3. 17. 11. 42	349 persons	
III. Amtskommissariat Schereschow		
Transported in:		
1. 7. 11. 42	422 persons	
2. 13. 11. 42	425 persons	
3. 19. 11. 42	466 persons	
		1,313 persons
Up to the end of 20. 11. 42	Resettled:	3,639 Persons

### The Imposition of Authority: Public Execution

The executions of August 1942, set in place a monthly trend of public executions until March 1943. The Luftwaffe chose to list some of the details of the executed. This could include their names, date of birth and on occasion the reason for their execution (including being Jewish). However, they always mentioned the place where they came from and it seems these details were being kept to pinpoint areas of resistance. These

<sup>61</sup> BA MA, RL31/3, the evacuated persons, and the numbers of available houses and farms in the region.

<sup>62</sup> BA MA, RL 31/3, the resettled ethnic Germans into the state forest.

macabre lists are reproduced here to illustrate this regularity and detail. The only possible explanation why the Germans did this is that it was a means to imposing their authority through terrorism. This kind of social control is consistent with Carlton's findings; discussed in chapter one, but they do not explain everything. One major problem in the existing literature that has not been fully explained or rationalised, is why the Germans returned to the older practice of public execution as a means of imposing their rule on an occupied territory. Even during the Franco-Prussian War, or the height of the First World War there was little evidence of large-scale public executions. There were, however, large numbers of public hangings in Namibia where both diaries and photographs exist as evidence.

The list of public executions provides a picture of the large numbers of Soviet Russian political agitators to whom Herbst referred. There was no evidence of a trial. In only one case is there any suggestion of violence towards the occupiers. How they were discovered is not explained, all we know is that they appeared to have a home address. It is quite remarkable that the SS-Dirlewanger Brigade, or any other SS commanders, felt confident enough to list, the name and place of their victims. To be so blatant suggests again that the JSKB had its own rules and could operate with relative impunity.

**Table 52: Execution through hanging (September 1942)<sup>63</sup>**

NO.	NAME	FIRST NAME	HOME
1	Klimus	Anrej	Boroditsche
2	Schimitschak	Anton	Boroditsche
3	Hantschuk	Antonia	Kamieniuki
4	Hantschuk	Olga	Kamieniuki
5	Hantschuk	Wera	Kamieniuki
6	Hantschuk	Marie	Kamieniuki
7	Hantschuk	Ignac	Kamieniuki
8	Nasarewitsch	Wlodmir	Kamieniuki
9	Nikitiuk	Dimitrik	Kamieniuki
10	Nasarewitsch	Stefan	Kamieniuki
11	Lis	Alexander	Kamieniuki
12	Prokoptschuk	Nicolai	Kamieniuki
13	Nasarewitsch	Andrej	Kamieniuki
14	Dobunewitsch	Ignaz	Boroditsche
15	Kalischuk	Michael	Boroditsche
16	Lobanowski	Alexi	Waldbahnhof Jagen 828
17	Sonnenschein	Vera	Seemiatytsche

The victims were not always Jews but it was Jews who figured as a group most notably in the text alongside the partisans (bandits). The imbalance between people

<sup>63</sup> BA MA, RL31/3, 9<sup>th</sup> September 1942. Grounds for hanging (Begünstigung und Unterstützung der Banden).

killed and weapons captured is startling, a ratio of one gun for every twelve persons. Non-Jewish and Jewish civilians alike were dealt with en masse and without particular description. On the 15 November 1942, 'at 12.30hr a Jew and his daughter were captured in Jagen 892.' According to the report the Jewish man 'boasted of escaping Kamieniec-Litewski Ghetto'. In a summary of the daily reports between 1<sup>st</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> November 1942, the first mention of killing Jews entered the reporting system. On the 19 November, a Jewess who was described as hungry and hiding in a swamp was shot while trying to run away. On the 20<sup>th</sup> November, the public execution of 12 people included the hanging of two Jews, (possibly father and son) Jakob and Schaja Gold from Mokransy. On the 4<sup>th</sup> December 1942, the first use of the term 'auf der Flucht erschossen' (they ran away and were shot) was applied to six Jews. Later that day, a further 18 Jews were discovered in a building, they were all shot. On the 10<sup>th</sup> December 1942, the second company hung a Jewish person called Israel in Orlanski.

**Table 53: Execution by hanging (November 1942)<sup>64</sup>**

NR	NAME	FIRST NAME	HOME	BORN
1	Koroway	Peter	Politscha	1. 10. 1903
2	Ochryniul	Matdy	Starzyna	1900
3	Gerasimiuk	Gregor	Politschna	Nov 1905
4	Michalowski	Alexander	Wojnowka	23. 3. 1896
5	Majeski	Makar	Wolkostawze	1903
6	Ryback	Iwan	Tafilowsze	August 1915
7	Stanischewski	Wlodimir	Pokoniewo	March 1907
8	Krupta	Alexander	Chlewischtsche	25. 8. 1905
9	Ryschtschuk	Wladimir	Rogatsche	1915
10	Gaponiuk	Stefan	Molotschki	27. 12. 1906
11	Gold	Jacob	Mokransy	25. 12. 1907
12	Gold	Schaja	Mokransy	12.10. 1925

**Table 54: Execution by hanging (November 1942)<sup>65</sup>**

NO	NAME	FIRST NMAE	HOME	BORN
1	Kosatschuk	Andrej	Wolostawicz	1902
2	Jaroschuk	Piotr	Omelandec	17. 6. 1912
3	Wlodatschik	Iwan	Kamieniki	1905
4	Ssajewitsch	Andreas	Wiluki	1899
5	Tankowski	Josef	Siemienowka	1912
6	Semienaka	Alexander	Siemienowka	1921
7	Sadowski	Wassil	Siemienowka	1907
8	Lesota	Josef	Siemienowka	1910
9	Hanczuk	Alexi	Kaninieć	1905

<sup>64</sup> BA MA, RL 31/3, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1942 in Bialowies. The explanation for the executions were, 1 to 5 bandits, 6-8 were communists. 9-10 NKVD workers and party members, 11-12 were Jews captured in the forests.

<sup>65</sup> The only explanation for victim number nine was that he had hanged himself in his cell.

The ‘bandits’ and their suspect supporters were not the only ones to receive extreme punishment. Six Russian prisoners of war working as farm labourers who tried to escape were shot on the 4 October 1942, almost certainly in the act of escaping. However, on the 24 October 1942, Herbst received a radio message from the Luftwaffe justice department wanting full details urgently for the compilation of its reports. There was no evidence of any inquiry. Meanwhile, the executions continued every month but by February 1943, the explanations seemed to end. The number of members from the same family continued with the executions of the 1 February 1943. There were three sets of persons with the same name:

**Table 55: Execution by hanging (February 1943)<sup>66</sup>**

NO.	NAME	VORNAME	HOME	BORN
1	Radetzki	Alexander	Wielka-Kollonna	27. 8. 07
2	Radetzki	Jan	Wielka-Kollonna	4. 5. 22
3	Bielinski	Stanislaus	Bialowies	21. 11. 73
4	Wegera	Lucian	Gulewicze	12. 12. 02
5	Skepke	Philipp	Hainowka	1902
6	Jankowski	Gregor	Kamien	1913
7	Segien	Nikifor	Kamien	12. 11. 07
8	Niczuboruk	Nikolai	Krywice	14. 11. 10
9	Ignasiuk	Alexander	Kamien	28.9.10
10	Golonko	Nikolai	Kowela	17. 2. 23
11	Golonko	Stefan	Kowela	12. 8. 05
12	Golonko	Anna	Kowela	1912
13	Dubke	Theodor	Chrobustowka	10. 10. 12
14	Stapaniuk	Omelam	Kurasczewo	1878
15	Pasieka	Anton	Starczynna	5. 1. 01
16	Grigoruk	Piotr	Kojly	1910
17	Solomienko	Iwan	Usmarczyna	1882
18	Moroz	Josef	Usmarczyna	1887
19	Wisniewski	Alexander	Wulki	12. 12. 1922
20	Miczeke	Antoni	Weschanko	1920
21	Miczeke	Iwan	Weschanko	23. 5. 24
22.	Gulkowicz	Sylvester	Nesterki	21. 12. 97
Jews				
1	Goldberg	Wela		
2	Kabinowitsch	Lew		

The last recorded public execution was on the 24 February 1943, when the JSKB was still under the command of Herbst. It is difficult to discover whether this routine in public killing was perceived to be having any effect on the community other than increasing the will to resist. There is no evidence that the partisans disappeared for any significant time period. The last execution was a shooting; we remain unaware of who, from the battalion, formed the firing squad.

<sup>66</sup> BA MA, RL 31/3, 1 February 1943 in Bialowies.

**Table 56: Execution by shooting (February 1943)<sup>67</sup>**

NR	NAME	FIRST NAME	HOME	BORN
1	Zylluk	Illarien	Hainowka	21.4. 04
2	Zylluk	Tatjana	Hainowka	1910
3	Michalczuk	Jan	Dubini	10. 9. 21
4	Radczenko	Aleexander	Nowosady	20.3.16
5	Labinski	Wladislaus	Dubini	11. 11. 20
6	Sawczuk	Wladimir	Saki	1910

The most disturbing case of social control took place on the 28<sup>th</sup> September 1942. On the pretext of making an example of the inhabitants of Roczkowka, Major Herbst sought endorsement from the SS and Police leaders. The plan called for the enforced removal of all children under 12, to be passed to families in other villages. All the adult inhabitants were to be shot. The village was to be repopulated by inhabitants from outlying villages. The plan was approved by SS-Standartenführer Fromm, the SSPF of Bialystok, on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 1942. On the dawn of the 28th September, the battalion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SS-Police Regiment and 3 JgKds from Herbst's battalion surrounded the village. The villagers were informed of their evacuation, and that the village was to be destroyed. Herbst declared the villagers *Bandenangehörigkeit* (dependant on the bandits like a husband and wife relationship). The inhabitants were given two hours to load their belongings onto trucks. While this was happening 73 teenagers were listed for work in Germany and transported to Białowieża. The *Hilfdienst* (civilian officials) and inhabitants from other villages were made to round up the larger farm animals (*Grossvieh*) and move them out. The small farm animals (*Kleinvieh*) were loaded onto panje-wagons to be taken to the civilian administration of the area. The list of farm animals was considerable, 113 horses, 258 beef cattle, 458 sheep, 115 pigs, and 363 chickens. Following this the 156 children under 12 were led away in panje-wagons with women from local villages.

That left only those who were to be shot, apart from 24 who were in neighbouring villages and were unaccounted for. Then, eight members of the village were vigorously questioned of which seven were allowed to go free. It was noted that three included a Cossack from the Denikin Army, the mother of a help service (*Hilfdienst*) man and a woman whose son was serving in the German army. It was then planned to shoot 264 of the 532 people who remained, there and then ('*Ort und Stelle*'). The grave pits had already been dug and the execution squad placed in front of them. The 264 were led to

<sup>67</sup> BA MA, RL 31/3, 24 February 1943, in Białowies.

the grave pit and Major Herbst chose to interrogate them one last time. It emerged, that in the spring of 1942, the village had suffered an outbreak of typhus and thus the bandits had stayed away. On the two occasions when the bandits had come to the village the local gendarmerie post had been informed. At one time the villagers had chased off the bandits with sticks and stones. One man, Soltys, was told that they were all to be shot and, according to Herbst, 'left a strong impression of an upright man'. In fact Herbst was calmed by Soltys' demeanour, because he did not behave like a weak dog (hündisch). Soltys refused to give names of bandit helpers because he said there were none. Herbst recognised that any admission would have saved the village a great deal of misery; as it seemed the villagers were not really bandit helpers, and doubts were raised over the suspicions of the V-Männer who had accused the village. Alexander Kuczynski was accused of taking his pigs to the bandits, so he too was questioned. It seemed his children had chased the pig and her piglets, in question, into the woods, but they had returned to his farm. The children had already been arrested by the gendarmerie and it was apparent that no one was hiding in the woods. Thus Herbst, convinced the villagers were telling the truth, decided not to shoot the 264, still standing before the grave-pits. Herbst gave the villagers another warning, as if they needed anymore. The children and the farm animals were then returned. Herbst concluded on a positive note, 'We have to suspect that the village will beat-up any bandit who even comes near to the village.' All the senior officers from the various forces agreed that on this occasion, sparing the inhabitants served the Germans well. The information gleamed from the arrested villagers confirmed Herbst's decision, but this did not find its way into his memo. Thus, the last of the villagers returned to the village on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 1942.<sup>68</sup>

Andreas Gautschi offers an alternative version of the incident. In the 1960s, the Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen, in Ludwigsburg, which handled war crimes on behalf of the Federal Republic of Germany, considered evidence from a Frau D. Herbst and several other witness statements. Major Herbst had received the denunciation of Roczkowka and informed Göring because of the scale of the killings to be initiated. Herbst had made the civilians dig the grave, but had begun to have his doubts when he realised that only four persons had had contact with the bandits. As a consequence he released the villagers after making them march past the grave.

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<sup>68</sup> BA MA, RL31/3, Aktenvermerk, 29<sup>th</sup> September 1942.

Consequently, as a result of his kindness, he became a legend within the local community. The subsequent resettlement policy, which was continued under difficult conditions, was administered with considerable care and consideration, under Herbst's leadership.<sup>69</sup> This grim reading is hardly the stuff of legends, especially when, a week before the incident, Herbst recorded those hanged in the joint actions with the SS:

**Table 57: Execution by hanging (September 1942)<sup>70</sup>**

NO	NAME	FIRST NAME	HOME	BIRTH
1	Kolunbiego	Iwan	?	27. 5. 1916
2	Kendis	Iwan	Piaski	4. 2. 1922
3	Chanowski	Josef	Koniuchowa	1. 2. 1915
4	Sabolotni	Elonidas	Bielsk	15. 4. 1916
5	Stanko	Peter	Kschywez	15. 5. 1908
6	Celey	Boleslaw	Cherlonka	3. 9. 1895
7	Celey	Maria	Cherlonka	January 1901
8	Gorotschik	Jan	Czwirki	1922
9	?	Iwan	Lumno	?

There were many occasions when the SS and Luftwaffe worked together in the execution of prisoners:

**Table 58: Execution by hanging (October 1942)<sup>71</sup>**

NO	NAME	VORNAME	HOME	BORN
1	Warinow	Boris	ohne	
2	Zukur	Dimitri	ohne	
3	Perkowski	Waclaw	Wdigkon	21.8.13
4	Potoptzow	Theodor	Gut Karoleen	27. 2. 22
5	Matkow	Georg	Wojnowka	20. 5. 19
6	Pawlik	Grigory	Ohne	11. 7. 14
7	Wereniul	Iwan	Dubiny	10. 10. 10.

The research of the history of execution has been popular in the last few years. In terms of German history, the leading scholar is Richard Evans with a study of capital punishment.<sup>72</sup> Evans, in keeping with many social historians, called upon the ideas of

<sup>69</sup> Gautschi, 1999, pp218-219. This is an unusual book which on the one hand recognises the crimes, but then glosses over this behaviour of the officers by suggesting they conducted themselves with humanity. Gautschi does this by balancing evidence from the German interrogations of the battalion's personnel in the 1950s with the selective use of officer files. He also took certain evidence from the David Irving collection of Luftwaffe papers. Then he writes a concoction using secondary literature by Daniel Goldhagen and Konrad Kwiet. It is noticeable that Gautschi did not refer to the surviving papers of the battalion lodged today with the Bundesarchiv Militärarchiv (Freiburg). The book was originally his doctoral thesis from Göttingen University. Without having scrutinised the papers from Freiburg one can only wonder at Gauschi's intentions by making such a conclusion. This seems to have been a major omission especially after he had gone to such considerable trouble to bring Edda Göring, Adolf Galland and David Irving's records into his research.

<sup>70</sup> BA MA, RL 31/3, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1942. The Celey couple (numbers 6 and seven) appear to have been man and wife. Executions by the SSPF Bialystok.

<sup>71</sup> BA MA, RL 31/3, 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1942 executions by SSPF Bialystok, of inhabitants from the district

<sup>72</sup> Richard J. Evans, *Rituals of Retribution: Capital Punishment in Germany, 1600-1987*, (Oxford, 1996).



Michel Foucault, the French philosopher, among others, to explain the historical path of German capital punishment.<sup>73</sup> Foucault's ideas are compelling, formulating the ideas of regimentation, the use of time, and the role of the modern bureaucratic industrial society in the regulation of life. Breaches of this regimentation leads to state sponsored punishment, in Foucault's view. Evans used this structure to assess the Nazis use of capital punishment. Unfortunately, Evans relied upon the existing knowledge of SS killings and Wehrmacht punishment but was unable to explain why the Germans returned to widespread use of the public execution. Similarly, other social historians who have chosen to use the thoughts of Foucault have failed to comprehend the gravity of this turn of events.<sup>74</sup> To some, this process might be deemed a return to barbarism, but that would surely lose the attributes of these methods of punishment. They were psychologically powerful and maintained a level of order through terror. This was not the wild killing in the forests, that was so similar to sport hunting. The public execution was orderly and managed with military precision. This behaviour was measured and calculated, and with hindsight has placed a hitherto unknown burden of guilt upon the Luftwaffe, the Reichsforstamt and the West German justice system.

#### **IV. Battalion Casualty and Expenditure Records**

There are two sources of casualties of the battalion. A list of casualties was found in war diary number two. In Herbst's last report (Bericht 16), he confirmed 7 dead and 23 wounded.<sup>75</sup> This initially led to the incorrect assumption that the unit had few losses and highlighted the dangers of purely relying upon the records from one archive. The complete casualty lists of the battalion are maintained in the DDSt. They are small, but not as small as the unit's own diary entries. They provide a brief record of brutal injuries and deaths. In contrast with the numbers of victims they appear insignificant. The graph, in highlights periods of intense casualties and long periods of quietness. In 1944, there was a case of suicide. This is not wholly unusual but cases of suicide generally occurred prior to a units' move into combat (fear of impending combat) or, near to the war's conclusion, in 1945 (despair at the loss of the war).

The first death in the battalion was that of Senior Private, Walter Borrmann from the third company. He was shot in the head on the 12<sup>th</sup> August 1942, at the Lesna-

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<sup>73</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (London, 1991).

<sup>74</sup> Gellately, 1991.

<sup>75</sup> BA MA, RL31/3, Bericht, no. 6, 5<sup>th</sup> March 1943.

Brüke. Borrmann was just 25 years of age, born in Tilsit in 1917. Two of his comrades were also severely wounded one in the shoulder and the other in the pelvis; they were 23 and 18 respectively.<sup>76</sup> The youngest to be killed was Grenadier Hugo Bange who was born on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 1926. He was 18 years of age.<sup>77</sup> His death was recorded on the 21<sup>st</sup> June 1944, in the area of Białowieża, coming from a bullet in the head, and was buried in Białowieża. The oldest to be killed was a Lieutenant of Reserve, Theodor Lüttge, who was born in Hamburg in February 1897. On the 4<sup>th</sup> March 1944, in the area of Rudziski, he had been shot three times, twice in the lung and once in the heart by machine pistol fire from 'Banditen'.<sup>78</sup> From the total number of 39 dead, the average age was 20 (based solely on the DDSt medical returns). There were two non-action cases. A private, aged 19 from Berlin, was mortally crushed in a motor accident and in another case a senior sergeant, 41 years of age from Königsberg, shot himself in the heart.<sup>79</sup>

The seriously wounded were transferred to one of the two reserve Luftwaffe military hospitals in Białystok. The dead were buried in numerous military graveyards in Bielsk, Białystok, and Białowieża. The number of wounded was recorded as 40, the vast majority being serious cases requiring intensive medical treatment. This, of course, suggests that the lightly wounded were not referred to higher quarters and probably administered locally. There was no typical wound, such as injuries caused by mines, or sniper fire. There were several cases of 'Durchschuss Gesäss' (shot in the arse). Limbs, legs and arms were prone to serious injuries. There was one trooper who suffered damage to an eye. Several severe cases led to death. One case a serious thigh wound turned gangrene and led to the trooper's death. Senior Private Alfred Nold, a 23 year old from Berlin, was shot in the liver, the doctors could not remove the bullet and he died of peritonitis. There was one case of TB and the trooper, Leonhard Widmann from Freising in Oberbayern, died at the age of 22, he had been hospitalised in Białystok.

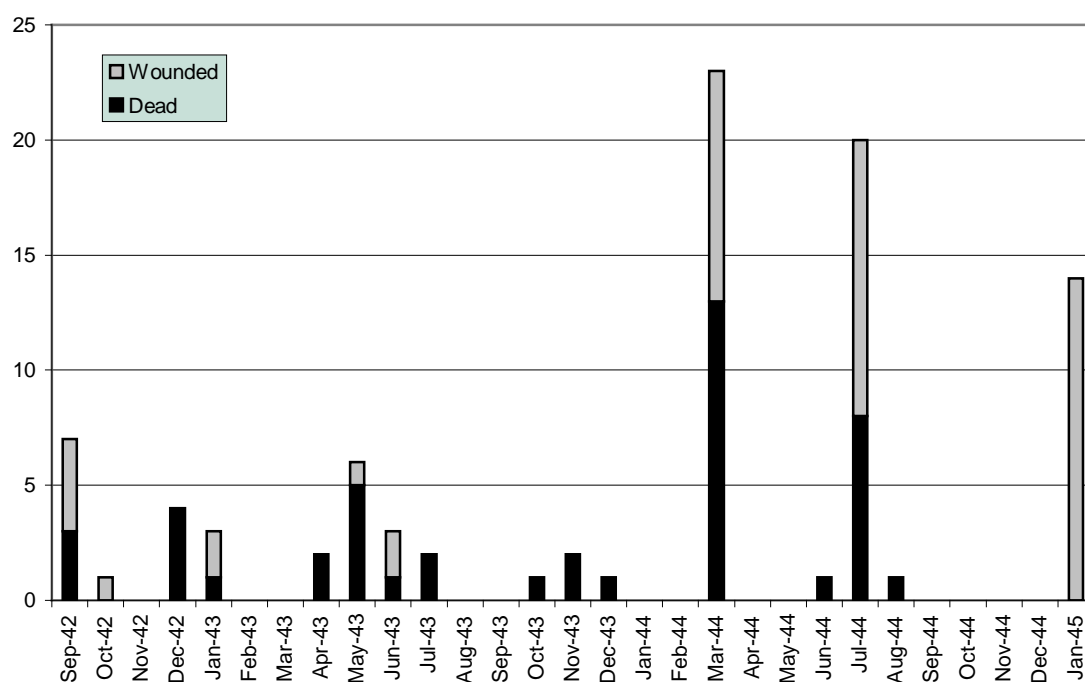
#### **Diagram 11: JSKB casualty figures (1942-1944)**

<sup>76</sup> DDSt, Namentliche Verlustmeldung Nr.1, 1-31<sup>st</sup> August 1942.

<sup>77</sup> DDSt, Namentliche Verlustmeldung Nr.10, 19-24<sup>th</sup> March 1944.

<sup>78</sup> DDSt, Namentliche Verlustmeldung Nr.9, 4-11<sup>th</sup> April 1944.

<sup>79</sup> These two cases remain anonymous.



The ammunition and fuel expenditures of the battalion also raise other questions that are not straightforward. The operational expenditures do not compare with the apparently small numbers of enemy casualties recorded after 1943. This fuel and ammunition expenditure was recorded:

**Table 59: Battalion expenditures**

DATE	AMMO	EXPEND	RESUPPLY	DATE	DIESEL	USED	RESUPPLY
5.3.43	389,218	nil		5.3.43	2,745	-	-
21.3.43	386,388	2,830		21.3.43	2,425	2,820	2,500
11.6.43	348,313	11,685		11.6.43	1,975	3,710	5,000
21.8.43	296,933	14,835		21.8.43	2,653	3,010	-
1.10.43	299,248	5,670	18,340	1.10.43	6,128	4,236	3,000
1.12.43	240,939	18,764		1.12.43	6,557	5,210	-
21.1.44	219,449	14,730		21.1.44	3,612	3,575	-
1.3.44	193,679	15,179		1.3.44	8,901	1,520	-

The period, June-October 1943, was noted for its relative lull in the partisan incursions. In the equation of the battalion's casualties, the number of enemy dead and the scale of routine work, it seems extraordinary to have made such large ammunition expenditures and large quantities of spent fuel. The only answer can be that the Luftwaffe was in fact using the area to conduct training under 'real-life' conditions. However, there is no suggestion that it was a training battalion even though transfers were regularly passed through it.

## V. Overall Performance and Results

The methods of this battalion were directed toward social control and the imposition of German rule. The base thinking of Herbst can be found in a letter he sent to the Gestapo in Berlin in September 1942:

During an exercise in co-operation with the SD in this territory there were a number of arrests of people operating in our rear area with a Banden organisation including the Jew Scherschinoski from the Bielsk ghetto. He had on his person a photograph of Kreisleiter Möller-Crivitz in Party-Leader-uniform, which had the following dedication on the back: "Best wishes Herr Schersch with fraternal greetings, Heil Hitler Möller-Crivitz."

An interrogation of the Jew Sch. testified that he and Möller-Crivitz were friends and had meetings together. He has met Möller-Crivitz on more than one occasion visited his home and carried out the dedication for his publishing factory. The friendship of a political leader, a National-Socialistic author with a Polish Jew is moderately strange. Perhaps you would like to deal with this problem, I have enclosed the photograph.<sup>80</sup>

His racialism and observance of party etiquette do not present this man in the best light. In Herbst's final report of the 5<sup>th</sup> March 1943, he cited the following as a measure of his, and the battalion's, success:

In the forest fighting, 92 shot including 6 Jews running away (auf der Flucht erschossen). Hostages, security threats and Bolsheviks executed, 174,

Court-martial or kangaroo court, 98 executed by hanging and shooting,

90 killed by the SD,

Bunkers and winter shelters, 66 destroyed, Summer shelters 55 destroyed,

Captured or destroyed weapons, 2 heavy machine guns, 4 light machine guns and 31 machine-pistols and rifles etc.

Cost in battalion's damages 5,600 RMs lost.

The resettlement of 10,000 households.

## VI. Summary

There is no surprise in the behaviour of this battalion. Since chapter three, the evidence has gradually been building toward a history of institutionalised terror. This was the

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<sup>80</sup> BA MA, RL31/3, to conclude his investigation he then told the Gestapo that the 'Jew Sch.' had lodged with Frau Wrede, at 11 Ansbacherstrasse in Berlin.

character of Bandenbekämpfung, exemplified by Major Herbst's presentation of 'favourable results'. It is also no surprise that after the war, few of the surviving members of this battalion wished to refer to this episode of their military careers, when claiming generous pensions. As to the character of these troopers perhaps when we think again of Sir Neville Henderson's comments about hunting, perhaps they were just ordinary men:

There is no rabid nationalism in sport, or at any rate that kind of sport [hunting], nor Socialism either, in the midst of unspoilt Nature, where all men are equal. From my host downwards everyone was simple, unaffected, and extremely friendly. The weather was perfect, and I enjoyed it immensely. Each night, after supper, the stags killed in the course of the day were brought in and laid on the grass in front of the house. A bonfire of pine-branches was lit beside them, a row of jägers [sic], or foresters, in their dark green uniform, stood in the shadows behind them, and after the head forester had read out the bag and the names of those who had killed each animal and had been answered in a few words of thanks by our host, the hallali [sic], or death of the stag, was sounded on the horns of the jägers. In the starlit night, in the depths of the great forest, with the notes of the horns echoing back from the tall fir-trees in the distance, the effect was extremely beautiful.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Henderson, 1940, pp90-91.

### **Chapter Eleven: Bandenbekämpfung - The End**

The dwindling hopes of victory had already turned, for those with any sense of realism, into the near certainty of ultimate defeat. Over the next months, the German people, the Nazi regime, and its Leader would become ever more beleaguered. Friends and allies would desert, territorial gains crumble, ever-intensifying air-raids lay waste to German cities, the insurmountable allied superiority of manpower and weaponry manifest itself ever more plainly, and indications at home begin to multiply that, whatever Goebbels rhetoric might suggest, loyalties towards the regime, and even towards Hitler personally, had become severely weakened.<sup>1</sup>

Security in the last year of the war took on a new, confused and desperate shape. The process of rationalisation continued changes introduced in 1942. The impending invasion of Normandy had led Britain and America to increase and extend the operations of their specialist forces. They sent military missions to partisan leaders to assist in the arming and training of their forces. The will to resist encouraged by these developments increased across Western Europe. The east remained in a state of chaos. Countries under occupation, namely Poland and Czechoslovakia, escalated their resistance activities. The axis alliance began to waver with the advance of the Red Army, just as Italy had collapsed with the allied invasion of Sicily. German security strategy in the last year of the war was therefore directed toward several goals. Firstly, to ensure their allies remained committed to the war. Secondly, to tighten the stranglehold on occupied countries with the severest response toward uprising and rebellion. Thirdly, there was a feverish continuation of the Nazi political and racial mission, with the genocide of the Jews and communists. Lastly, the security forces became involved in the evacuation of German colonists, deportation of the remaining labourers, the collection of the last plunder and the creation of last lines of defence. The events in this last year saw the war end in a maelstrom of killing and destruction that has left permanent scars on the European landscape.

#### **I. Festung Europa: The Fifth Front**

If a few isolated Commando troops are spared at first for interrogation purposes, I consider it necessary for the Security Police authorities to take part in the interrogation. The further treatment of members of Commandos, who are finally to be treated as killed in action, is however, even in these

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<sup>1</sup> Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1936-1945: Nemesis*, (London, 2000), p562.

cases, the responsibility of the armed forces.<sup>2</sup>

Between January and December 1944, Hitler extended further the punitive jurisdiction against commandos and specialist forces. On the 30<sup>th</sup> January 1944, Hitler introduced further jurisdiction concerning the increasing problem of gangs of guerrillas across Europe.<sup>3</sup> Later, on the 26<sup>th</sup> June, it was announced that all parachutists beyond the immediate area of the Normandy combat zone, whether or not in uniform, were to be summarily executed.<sup>4</sup> In June 1944, the commando order of 1942 was formally extended to parachutists in Brittany, irrespective of their uniform or part of the main allied offensive.<sup>5</sup> In the following month, on the 19<sup>th</sup> July 1944, the commander of the SD in Radom issued an order making all family relatives of 'terrorists' collectively responsible.<sup>6</sup> On the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1944,<sup>7</sup> the question of foreign military missions to partisan and local units was once again raised, leading to the decision of the 30<sup>th</sup> July 1944, that all military missions, Soviet, British or Americans, whether in uniform or not, were to be executed under the remit of the commando order.<sup>8</sup> These policies were not confined to the fighting fronts. On the 6<sup>th</sup> December 1944, Keitel issued the following instructions to the OKW representatives in Norway:

In the matter of checking sabotage in Norway, I agree with the view of the Reich Commissioner for Occupied Norwegian territory, to the extent that I expect results from reprisals only if they are carried out ruthlessly and if Reich Commissioner Terboven is authorised to carry out the shootings.<sup>9</sup>

### The Balkans

He spent two days receiving voluminous reports and then gave it as his opinion that, compared with the eastern front, fighting the partisans in

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<sup>2</sup> NA, IMT 1276-PS, Commando Operations, Führer Order 18.10.1942, reconfirmed 20 June 1944.

<sup>3</sup> NA, IMT D-753-B, Combating of terrorists and saboteurs in the occupied territories. Jurisdiction, OKW, No 009169/44, 30<sup>th</sup> January 1944: Captive men were to be passed to the SD; women not involved in the fighting to be made to work and children to be spared for re-education.

<sup>4</sup> NA, IMT 551-PS, Treatment of Kommando Participants

<sup>5</sup> NA, IMT 532-PS, Treatment of Commandos: 28<sup>th</sup> June 1944. It is perhaps not therefore surprising that British paratroopers captured at Arnhem, in 1944, were sent to Monowitz Labour Camp, near Auschwitz.

<sup>6</sup> NA, IMT L-37, Collective responsibility of members of families of assassins and saboteurs, 19th July 1944.

<sup>7</sup> NA, IMT 1279-PS, Treatment of members of foreign "military missions" captured with partisan groups. In a memo from General Warlimont acknowledged by Keitel, the number of agencies involved in the handling of allied special forces was listed for operations emanating from Southeast Europe.

<sup>8</sup> NA, IMT 537-PS, Treatment of members of foreign "military missions", captured together with partisans.

<sup>9</sup> NA, IMT 871-PS, teletype to Reichsminister Lammers from Wilhelm Keitel, 6<sup>th</sup> December 1944.

Croatia was child's play, pointing out that the partisans never made a stand but ran away whenever they were energetically attacked. It was the only visit that von dem Bach-Zelewski paid Croatia, but the consequences of his report were that the central authorities in Berlin only most reluctantly and hesitatingly recognised the unsuitability of the initial organisation. When the formation of mobile police regiments was finally approved, much valuable time had been lost.<sup>10</sup>

Bandenbekämpfung in the Southwest region of Europe and Italy increased in intensity during the latter half of 1943 and the first months of 1944. The evidence indicates that significant changes were taking place within German security policy in this respect; the presence of key SS officers in this region confirms this. Bach-Zelewski as the new Chef der Bandenkampfverbände increased his presence in the area. In June 1944, he was officially replaced as HSSPF Russland-Mitte (by von Gottberg), due due in part to his increasing responsibilities and commitments in the Balkans.<sup>11</sup> The appearance of SS-Obergruppenführer Odilo Globocnik promoted to HSSPF Adriatisches-Küstenland (Adriatic Coast), in Trieste, with SS-Oberstgruppenführer Karl Wolff (HHSSPF Italy) as his regional commander, indicate Himmler's growing ambitions for the area.<sup>12</sup> Together the presence of Wolff, Bach-Zelewski and Globocnik suggest Himmler was trying to maintain the contact between his most trusted lieutenants.

The post war testimony of a police officer shows that this area was being turned into a Bandenkampfgebiet. Heinrich Blaser also provided some details of the organisational structure within Globocnik's HSSPF.<sup>13</sup> Blaser was a senior lieutenant of the Schutzpolizei assigned to work under Globocnik from 19<sup>th</sup> January 1944 until the 30<sup>th</sup> April 1945. The SS was responsible for forming defences against the impending attack from Tito's forces. They introduced a security 'blocking' system to regulate communications and to conduct anti-bandit operations against Italian partisans. The

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<sup>10</sup> FMS, Karl Gaisser, *ibid*.

<sup>11</sup> A copy of the letter was found in Curt von Gottberg's SS-personnel file, who replaced Bach-Zelewski in June 1944.

<sup>12</sup> Gitta Sereny, *Into that Darkness: From mercy killing to mass murder*, (London, 1995). In this study of Franz Stangel Sereny provides a complete background to this programme of genocide and Globocnik's move to Trieste. He appeared to take his senior extermination camp commanders with him. Thus the leading mass killers of the SS found themselves working one last time together in the Balkans and Italy.

<sup>13</sup> NA T1270, roll 23, frames 0367-0386, Heinrich Blaser, interrogation 27<sup>th</sup> February 1946, case S0799. In April 1942 he had completed his training at the police officers candidate school in Fürstenfeldbruck near Munich, as a reserve police officer. In 1944 as a Leutnant of the Schutzpolizei he was sent to Trieste, becoming adjutant to the SSPF initially SS-Standartenführer Hildebrandt and then SS-Sturmabführer Michalsen. The latter was born in 1909 and had been a bookkeeper. He had participated in the Freikorps battles against the Poles in Oppeln in 1924.



field units were formed from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Italian Militia Regiment, a detachment of German police and some Carabinieri, a total of 1,630 men. As in Poland in 1940, Globocnik relied on the Gendarmerie detachments to build a militia. Under the procedural instructions issued in June 1943, Globocnik formed a leadership staff for Bandenbekämpfung.<sup>14</sup> The staffs (Bandenkampfstab) were placed under the command of an SS-Sturmabführer. This staff planned two Operations 'Osterglocke' (1-4 April 1944) and 'Braunschweig' (May 1944). The intention behind Osterglocke was to clear the area south of Croatia and to prevent partisan incursion. Operation Braunschweig lasted for seven days in mid May 1944, operational plan was to capture the local partisan headquarters and its leaders; in this it was a failure. In mid June 1944, the partisans counter-attacked in force, annihilating the weak Italian forces and the Germans lost ground. From another interrogation at Nuremberg, of Friedrich Dupont, an ex-SS-Obersturmführer, a confession was made to being a member of the Skorzeny commando. Otto Skorzeny had made a name for himself for rescuing Mussolini from the mountain site where members of the Italian resistance were holding him prisoner.<sup>15</sup> Following training in sabotage and explosives Dupont was posted to Yugoslavia joining Skorzeny's commando (Jagdverbände Karstjäger), which was under the command of Globocnik.<sup>16</sup> This presence of Skorzeny indicates a more sophisticated security operational structure than has hitherto been understood.

In Italy responsibility for security led to an internal battle between SS-Oberstgruppenführer Karl Wolff (HHSSPF Italy) and Field Marshal Albert Kesselring (commander of the German forces in Italy). This argument has been mentioned from Bach-Zelewski in his diary, in chapter six.<sup>17</sup> Wolff liked to portray himself, after the war, as a saviour to the Italian people. That he had tried in vain to prevent Kesselring's

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. chapter six.

<sup>15</sup> NA, SS personnel file, Otto Skorzeny. He spent the post war years duping commentators and historians alike about his commando achievements in a bluff to cover his less attractive associations. Skorzeny had left the Luftwaffe to become a member of the SS-Totenkopfverbände and trained in the area of Buchenwald concentration camp. He joined the RSHA and was a covert operations specialist working under Walter Schellenberg. He later participated in the Ardennes Offensive, wearing an American uniform amongst his other minor misdemeanours. Skorzeny eventually escaped from American captivity and lived in hiding in Ireland and Spain until his death. His memoirs, 'My Commando Operations', often cited as evidence of his expertise and daring, were a reflection of the man's fickle character and were written to disguise more than they revealed.

<sup>16</sup> NA, T1270, roll 23, interrogation Friedrich Dupont, 24<sup>th</sup> August 1945.

<sup>17</sup> TVDB, on the 20<sup>th</sup> April 1944 entry Bach-Zelewski mentioned the difficulties Wolff was having with the Wehrmacht in establishing a Bandenkampfgebiet and that when he was fit for duty he would work to organise the region accordingly.

pigheadedness from leading to reprisals. Kesselring's view of the situation was that from May 1944, Karl Wolff came under his command against Himmler's wishes:

This arrangement was somewhat politically flavoured and was therefore unsatisfactory from a military point of view; however, a workable arrangement since the "Guerrilla Warfare Operations Staff", which was created within the office of the Chief SS and Police officer was a useful tool.<sup>18</sup>

Interestingly, Kesselring was the only captured senior German officer to openly refer to the 1942 Bandenbekämpfung manual discussed in chapter four, '...the pamphlet 'Guerrilla Warfare' [Bandenbekämpfung] published in 1942 was not distributed to his troops.'<sup>19</sup> This was a curious statement to make when he was neither being questioned about the subject nor under trial conditions. Kesselring formulated maxims for guerrilla warfare which seem to endorse Hitler's code of practice:

- a. The importance of intelligence was increased, including the work of the GFP and their informers;
- b. The use of surprise counter-measures. Avoiding the frontal attack, which dispersed the guerrillas. The capture of the guerrilla camp he deemed a waste of time unless they were actually in it. The preferred method was to surround the guerrillas and systematically destroy them. Guerrilla raids had to be immediately counter-attacked. It was also essential to snatch a partisan turning them into a prisoner for interrogation purposes. Attacking strongly defended positions required the employment of assault troops like pioneers or engineers.
- c. Fighting was to be continued until the enemy were completely destroyed. The possibility of further threats from the same group had to be prevented, their eradication was seen as crucial. The fighting had to be brutal and without carelessness, 'guerrilla warfare required a moral readjustment which in itself concealed great dangers.'<sup>20</sup>

The historian should be very wary concerning how to distinguish between Kesselring and Wolff versions of the event, both inveterate liars.<sup>21</sup> Both men escaped justice but were deeply guilty of instigating ruthless measures of coercion.

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<sup>18</sup> Generalfeldmarschall Albert Kesselring, FMS, C-032, *The War Behind the Front: Guerrilla Warfare*, 28 July 1947.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p19.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p27.

<sup>21</sup> The only history to study their relationship was Bradley F. Smith and Elena Agarossi, *Operation Sunrise: The Secret Surrender*, (London, 1979). Karl Wolff had been deeply involved in the genocide

Bandenbekämpfung Institutionalised

There was no comprehensive training manual written on anti-partisan operations until the summer of 1944, when the Germans had for all intents and purposes been defeated in Russia. This "Manual on Warfare against Bandits" was based upon the experiences of all parts of the Armed Forces, the SS and police and concluded that the good anti-partisan leader had to combine military and police qualifications. In fact, the offensive is based on military technique, and the defence largely on police methods.<sup>22</sup>

The revision of the 1942 manual of Bandenbekämpfung was made in May 1944. Heilbrunn and Dixon waxed lyrical in the 1950s on its advanced ideas of counter-insurgency methods, and so will not be detailed here.<sup>23</sup> It was their contention that it had taken until May 1944 for a comprehensive training manual to be written on anti-partisan techniques, when the Germans had for all intents and purposes been defeated in Russia. This manual was, supposedly, based upon the collective experiences of the Armed Forces, the SS and police.<sup>24</sup> It was issued through the OKW and came with an instruction from General Jodl to ignore all prior guidelines.<sup>25</sup> There was of course no reference to the 1942 booklet. It concluded that the good anti-partisan leader had to combine military and police qualifications. In fact, the balance lay between the two styles, the offensive action based upon military technique, and the defensive measures associated with police methods. Dixon and Heilbrunn were obviously unaware of the existence of the earlier manual, and, due to the American reluctance to release captured documents before the 1960s, were denied access to the details of Bandenbekämpfung operations. The manual was not mentioned in Bach-Zelewski's diary nor in Walter Warlimont's memoirs, both responsible for its publication.<sup>26</sup>

The existence of this manual did not prevent further acts of terror from taking place during the Warsaw and Slovakian uprisings. Neither did it prevent outbreaks of

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process. When he was captured he handed Himmler's personal papers to the Americans (referred to in this work as NA, T175). One letter was found from 1942 when he thanked the director of the railways for the use of wagons to transport the Jews.

<sup>22</sup> Simpson, 1976, p44.

<sup>23</sup> Dixon and Heilbrunn, 1954.

<sup>24</sup> NA, IMT RF411 (French), Merkblatt 69/2, issued on the 6<sup>th</sup> May 1944.

<sup>25</sup> NA, hard copy records, IMT, RF411, translated version, 13<sup>th</sup> January 1948. Instructional pamphlet 69/2 "Combating Bands" comes into force for the Wehrmacht on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1944. Instructional pamphlet, for service use only 69/1 "Combat instructions for the Combating of Bands in the East" (11<sup>th</sup> November 1942) is thereby invalidated. The reference to the 11<sup>th</sup> November 1942 guidelines was a means to denying SS authority and Himmler's 1942 manual.

<sup>26</sup> Walter Warlimont, *Hitler's Headquarters, 1939-1945*, (London, 1960).

atrocities in Italy and France, most notably Oradour-sur-Glane (June 1944), conducted by frontline troops. By 1944, an image of Bandenbekämpfung was being projected throughout the German media that was generating a cult of security. Reports of Bandenbekämpfung made daily appearances in the newspapers. The newsreel films, especially of the uprising in Slovakia, portrayed the insidiousness of the partisans with their Jewish-Bolshevik origins. Facial close-ups of captured partisans reinforced blatant references to their racial characteristics.<sup>27</sup> At the same time the newspapers portrayed the recipients of Germany's highest medals as the nation's new heroes. After the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 a shield was issued for the participants to place on the left arm of their uniforms. Later in 1944 the Bandenbekämpfungfabzeichen (a proficiency award) was issued, with grades based upon the total number of days' participation in Bandenbekämpfung, and which was to be worn on the left breast.<sup>28</sup>

For Germans living in the larger industrial cities the problem of the banditry began to have a real meaning. Many of the captured partisans brought into the Reich, as forced labour, escaped to wreak chaos and sabotage within German cities. The city of Cologne, in 1944, was a case in point.<sup>29</sup> In August 1943 an experienced police officer, Kriminal Kommissar Kurt Bethke was transferred to Cologne (refer to *Dramatis Personae*). The bombing and wartime pressures on Cologne had begun to undermine the social cohesion of the city. In May 1944, Bethke began to centre his investigations on Polish resistance activities. Meanwhile Bethke's colleagues in Stuttgart had begun to track the resistance movement in 1942. They had introduced V-Männer (trusties) into their network and this had led to the arrest of the Polish leader in Cologne Leonhard Kendzierski, his brother and a courier, Edmund Ulinski. The information these men disclosed led to arrests across Germany. They confirmed that the resistance movement had taken a considerable hold amongst the foreign workers. Their activities included espionage and sabotage (ranging from attacks on the railways to the total destruction of installations). In April 1944, a Polish resistance courier came to Cologne with the message ordering resisters to join any approaching allied army from the west. In the event of an uprising in Germany, they should let events take their course and not get

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<sup>27</sup> NA, film collections, RG242, Yugoslavia and Slovakia 1943-44.

<sup>28</sup> The badge portrayed the many headed Hydra coiled around the blade of a sword with a Swastika on the hilt. In some respects had cultural links with the imagery designed by the Freikorps movement.

<sup>29</sup> NA, T1270, roll 23, the interrogation of criminal commissar Bethke. In April 1945, Kriminal Kommissar Kurt Bethke gave evidence to the Americans of German internal security activities.

involved. In the event of a general collapse, they were to make their way back to Poland in groups of 100-200. By August 1944, the situation had deteriorated further as terrorist gangs began openly killing policemen, party members and soldiers. According to Bethke his group arrested an eastern worker in September whose band had killed a policeman. This led to an operation to destroy the band, resulting in gun battles through the streets. The seriousness of the situation led to further companies of police joining the fighting.<sup>30</sup>

## **II. The Pacification of Uprisings**

Polish resistance to German occupation, forcible recruitment and genocide was widespread. In a document written in 1942, the following assessment of the situation found its way to London:

Polish-German relations are based on mutual contempt. The Poles despise the Germans as robbers, bandits, primitive people, louts, cheats and liars the Germans despise the Poles as bad soldiers, hopeless organisers, as people who live in wretched circumstances have little to eat and now no longer have their own state.

As a result of the corruptibility, greed for profit, venality, and corruption of the administrative apparatus, they [the Germans] have completely destroyed the earlier legend of German law-abidingness, the German sense of order and honesty, German talent for organisation. The Polish population does not allow itself to be in the least impressed by the mendacious German propaganda about 'the model administration in the East' since it knows only too well from its daily experience what the morality, the honesty, and the justice of this whole apparatus, with which we in the occupied territories, have been saddled, is worth.<sup>31</sup>

The one Nazi leader who remained wary of Poland was Himmler. In 1940, his Metz speech, (referred to in detail in chapter 3), explained the killing operations in Poland. In his speeches of 1943, he reiterated his feelings about Poland:

It is a mere nothing today to shoot 10 Poles, compared with the fact that we might later have to shoot tens of thousands in their place, and compared to the fact that the shooting of these tens of thousands would then be carried

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<sup>30</sup> On the 10 May 2000, Frank Gierllen an ex-veteran of the Belgium resistance movement provided an interview regarding his recollections of the last year of the war. His resistance unit operated on the German border near Aachen, which was monitored by the Cologne Gestapo. He recalled two Soviet partisans captured by the Germans, sent to Germany as slave labour arrived in Cologne. They escaped and joined the Belgian resistance unit and began training the Belgians. The Soviet partisans were thoroughly in all kinds of sabotage techniques including blowing up railway lines and installations.

<sup>31</sup> N&P, volume 3, document 714, p952.

out even at the cost of German blood. Every little fire will immediately be stamped out and quenched and extinguished – otherwise – as in the case of a real fire – a political and psychological surface-fire may spring up among the people.<sup>32</sup>

In another speech, also delivered in 1943, Himmler reiterated the National Socialist paranoia of 1919 in Polish context:

Back to the year 1919. The fight for Germandom stretched across the Warthegau, Oberschliesen, West Prussia, and small areas of the borders. This was a fight against the bandit and our soldiers and the defence was successful. But where had the Polish expertise come from? The Polish nation used good organisation. Their troops were excellent fighters, the men's careers included award of the Iron Cross first class, some were old Prussian senior sergeants, there were veteran sergeants, many had been taught in German schools... They had been willing to learn peoples war, they were prepared to give blood and they knew how to use German order and precision against us. This game plan must never be allowed to be repeated.<sup>33</sup>

The German army papers highlight the continued monitoring of the resistance movement in Poland and the government in exile. These detailed files contain comprehensive organisation charts of Polish resistance. In one report Gehlen's department made a pointed summary of the potential for revolt in Poland a month before the Warsaw uprising broke out:

The Polish opposition-movement at the: 1<sup>st</sup> July 1944.

The situation inside the territory of Poland has become marked by:

1. The population is employing all methods necessarily hostile to Germans,
2. Citizens in large parts of the rural population are lined up alongside the English anti-Communist movement,
3. There is bitter enmity between the Polish and the Ukrainian population Galician.
4. The forests are where many splinter groups are hiding.

As consequence of these contrary political currents, the tension between Polish government in exile and the Soviet Union sponsored movement, the Polish rank and file movement has splintered into numerous groups, most importantly the government-in exile in London supports the nationalists and the Moscow government supports the Communist resistance movement. The

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<sup>32</sup> NA, IMT 1919-PS, op cit.

<sup>33</sup> Himmler speech 1943

remaining groups play only a minor political and military roll. In our judgment the plans for revolt given the Polish character inclines toward a strong but not over-estimated possibility, given the general political and military situation.<sup>34</sup>

Gehlen continued to focus upon the potential clash of the political factions. He maintained this monitoring to the very last days of the war. On the 10<sup>th</sup> July 1944, there were considerable numbers of attacks along the railway lines between Cracow and Warsaw. The situation in the General-government had deteriorated further. The 17<sup>th</sup> July 1944, saw random shootings at German vehicles in the area of Lublin. In the area of Sparozew there was an 800 man partisan group. Northeast of Lublin, there was another band of 1,000 men, and near Bilgoraj the bandit group 'Stalin' of 300 men. There were V-manner reports from Lemberg area where it was reported that a bandit group made up of Polish-Jews air landed with over 2,000 men. Another group in the area of Lemberg was reputed to be 800 strong to the south another group of 400 bandits named the 'Tschepigia-Bande', which was at the time being dealt with by the police.

#### Reversing Stalingrad: The Destruction of Warsaw (1944)

Almost from the beginning of the Warsaw uprising, Himmler referred to it as another Stalingrad, 'It is the hardest battle we have fought since the beginning of the war. It is comparable with the house-to-house fighting in Stalingrad.'<sup>35</sup> The Battle of Warsaw was just like Stalingrad, according to a letter from Heinz Reinefarth, who had spent most of 1942 and 1943 behind a desk in Poland.<sup>36</sup> For Himmler the battle was a historical fight between the Poles and the Germans:

My Führer the timing is unfortunate. But from a historical point of view it is a blessing that the Poles are doing that. We'll get through the four and five weeks [it will take] and then Warsaw, the capital city, the brain, the intelligence of this 16-17 million-strong Polish nation will have been obliterated, this nation which has blocked our path to the east for seven hundred years and since the first battle of Tannenberg, has always been in the way. Then the historic problem will no longer be a major one for our children, for all those who come after us, and for us too. Moreover, I simultaneously gave orders for Warsaw to be totally destroyed. You may think I am a fearful barbarian. If you like I am one, if I have to be. My

<sup>34</sup> NA, T78 roll 562, frame 000476, OKH, Generalstab des Heeres, Fremde Heere Ost (Bd) H. Qu. Den 1. 7. 44, Nr. 4100 44 geh. Geheim.

<sup>35</sup> N & P, volume 3, document 714 (d), p952

<sup>36</sup> NA SS personnel file, Heinz Reinefarth, file note October 1944.

orders were to burn down and blow up every block of houses. As a result, one of the biggest abscesses on the eastern front has been removed.<sup>37</sup>

The argument over when Bach-Zelewski took command of German forces during the Warsaw uprising became a heated post-war issue. Bach-Zelewski asserted that he was in Danzig preparing fortifications along the River Vistula when uprising began. He had wondered why he had not been called upon to take charge, a reaction he based upon his expertise in this kind of work. Bach-Zelewski made representations to the KSRRFSS, but was told that Himmler had gone to Posen to conduct operations personally. Not wanting to be overlooked in this matter Bach-Zelewski spoke directly with Hitler's headquarters. Initially the SS liaison officer, Hermann Fegelein, told him that the uprising was to be resolved by Himmler, and Lieutenant General Stahel of the Luftwaffe. That an early collapse was expected, but a few days later Fegelein phoned Bach-Zelewski:

I was told furthermore that the full power which I had asked of the Führer was given, and that I should put down the uprising quickly and forcefully. Replacements could not be counted upon, because the Russian breakthrough at Minsk tied up all forces as far as the Weichsel River.<sup>38</sup>

According to his diary, Bach-Zelewski began co-ordinating operations in Warsaw from the 5-6 August 1944. He had received his orders from Himmler on the 4<sup>th</sup> August, by telephone.<sup>39</sup> On the 15<sup>th</sup> August, Bach-Zelewski was made overall commanding officer of Warsaw operations. The command structure was later written down by Bach-Zelewski after the war (Diagram 12). It is possible that Bach-Zelewski was brought into the command position to economise the German effort by the use of poorer-quality troops. This would allow the urgently needed frontline formations to be released from the attrition of street fighting.

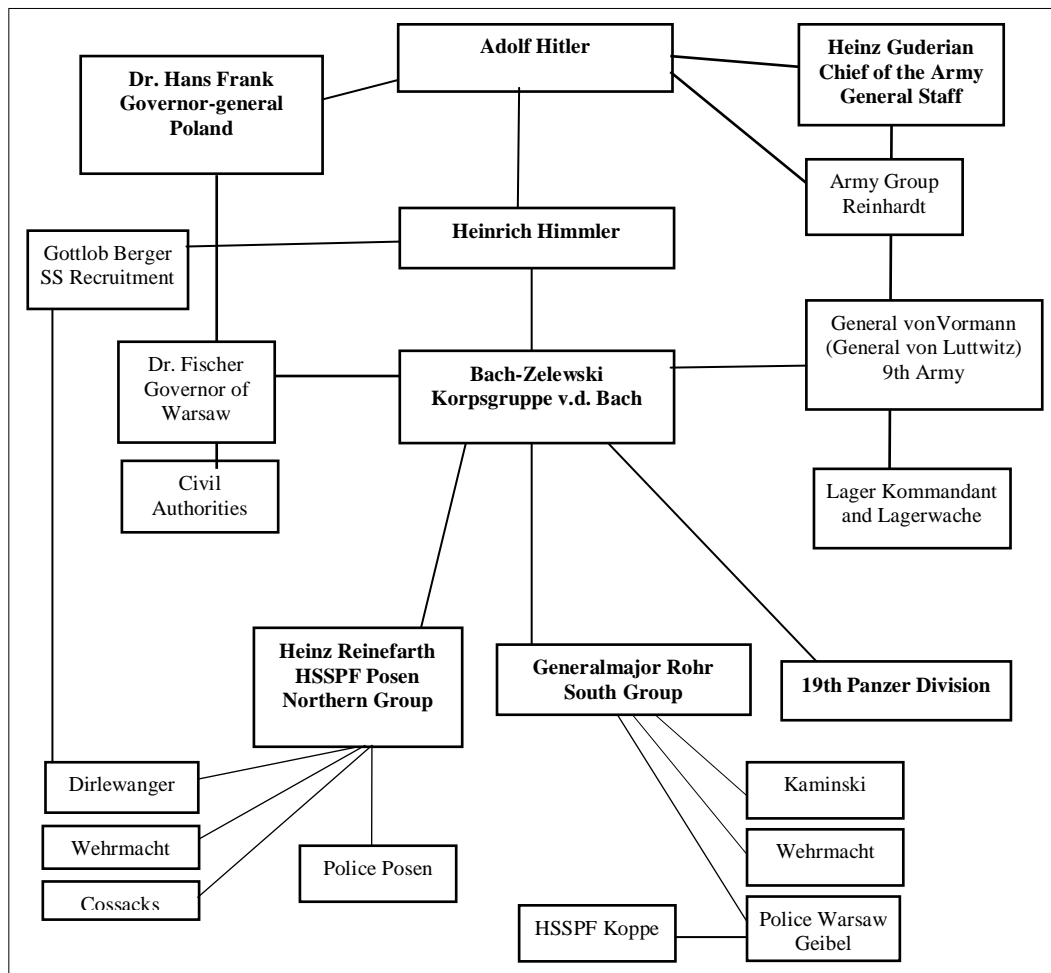
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<sup>37</sup> N & P, volume 3, document 714 (d), p952

<sup>38</sup> BZ-IMT, 29<sup>th</sup> January 1946.

<sup>39</sup> TVDB, p106. Under cross examination Bach-Zelewski was asked by the Polish prosecutor (on 26th January 1946) when he actually took command. He replied in kind on the 13-15<sup>th</sup> August 1946, stating that he took command on the 5<sup>th</sup> August 1944, BZ-USMT, 14<sup>th</sup> August 1946.



**Diagram 12: Bach-Zelewski's chain of command in Warsaw (1944)**<sup>40</sup>

The force structure that Bach-Zelewski referred to is listed in the table below:

**Table 60: Bach-Zelewski's forces during the Warsaw uprising**<sup>41</sup>

CORPS TROOPS:	KAMPFGRUPPE REINEFARTH:
34 <sup>th</sup> Police Schutz Regiment	Sonder-Regiment Dirlwanger (with 2 battalions easterner Muslims)
I SS Flak detachment (KSRFSS)	501 <sup>st</sup> SS-Jäger Regiment
	Regiment Schmidt
Kampfgruppe Rohr:	Police Battalion 'Burghardt'
I battalion, 17 <sup>th</sup> SS-Police Regiment	Regiment Reck
246 <sup>th</sup> Landeschützen Battalion	Sturm-Pionier Regiment Herzog
944 <sup>th</sup> Security Battalion	Police Battalion Sarnow
10 <sup>th</sup> Mixed Wehrmacht Police Battalion	3 <sup>rd</sup> Cossack Regiment
906 <sup>th</sup> Artillery Battalion	2 <sup>nd</sup> Azerbaijan Battalion
	Police Flamethrower Battalion
	302 <sup>nd</sup> Panzer detachment with Sturm Panzer Company 218
Also:	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sturmgeschütz Detachment 200
25 <sup>th</sup> Panzer Division	Sturm-Mörser company 1000
Kampfgruppe Berhard (Korück 532)	Heavy Fortifications Mortar Battery 201
1 <sup>st</sup> Air Force Division	2 <sup>nd</sup> Battery of heavy artillery
	695 <sup>th</sup> Railway Battery
	5 <sup>th</sup> Armoured Train

<sup>40</sup> Modelled from Bach-Zelewski's evidence presented at the Polish war crimes trial in 1947, in Warsaw.

<sup>41</sup> TVDB, pp114-115.

A further controversy concerned the drumhead court-martial of Bronislaw Kaminski who had collaborated with the Germans since 1942. In 1943, Hitler had commended him for his actions in suppressing partisans in Russia. With the German retreat westwards his force was transferred to the command of the, and in August 1944 they were sent to Warsaw. There is a general consensus that the unit behaved abominably with widespread drunkenness, killings, rapes and pillage. This was not the only troublesome force in Warsaw. The SS-Dirlewanger Brigade was operating in a similar free and apparently uncontrolled manner. The question of the execution came down to why Kaminski and not Dirlewanger, or even both? The issue was never satisfactorily resolved. Gerald Reitlinger suggested Bach-Zelewski claimed that he had Kaminski tried and executed, whereas Guderian said he acted 'to get rid of a not irreproachable witness'.<sup>42</sup> In his diary, Bach-Zelewski stated that, on the evening of the 28<sup>th</sup> August, he formed a Standgerichtssitzung (drumhead court-martial) for Kaminski in Litzmannstadt. Padfield said the SS disguised the killing of Kaminski by staging a mock partisan attack.<sup>43</sup> The SS court martial was determined upon the refusal by Kaminski to obey orders. Bach-Zelewski later told his captors that he had had Kaminski and three of his staff officers removed from their men by a ruse and then executed by an SS firing squad. He also said the Kaminski Brigade could be transferred away because new units were made available to him.<sup>44</sup> On the basis of the evidence it would seem that Bach-Zelewski was removing from his command people he could no longer rely upon. This was part of his preparations for the coming end to the war.

The final controversy concern the surrender and subsequent treatment of the Poles. The surrender document of the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1944, was based on the Geneva Convention of 1929. Bach-Zelewski alleged that a special train took the Polish commander Bor-Komorowski with his staff to Bach-Zelewski's headquarters in East Prussia. He said that he flew ahead to ensure Himmler did not break the agreement. Bach-Zelewski stated that Hitler had confirmed the surrender document and then he (Bach-Zelewski) gave up his command in Warsaw.<sup>45</sup> The Poles left a different record of

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<sup>42</sup> Reitlinger, 1956, p377. In his memoirs in 1952, General Heinz Guderian stated that Bach-Zelewski had Kaminski killed because he did not want any awkward witnesses around, Heinz Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, London, 1953, p289.

<sup>43</sup> Padfield, 1990, p527.

<sup>44</sup> BZ-IMT, 29<sup>th</sup> January 1946.

<sup>45</sup> BZ-IMT, 29<sup>th</sup> January 1946.

the surrender. The Polish delegation of four officers was driven to Bach-Zelewski's headquarters in Ozarow, a country house full of portraits of Polish aristocracy. There they discussed surrender with Bach-Zelewski's chief of staff, Colonel of Police Goltz. When the document was signed he then made a short speech as how this would save more lives and then telephoned Himmler with the news.<sup>46</sup>

Bach-Zelewski said he had striven to save the civilians, alleging that he had organised a Polish commission to run camps, hospitals and kitchens. The Pruszkow Collection Camp came under the control of the Governor of Warsaw Dr. Fischer. Bach-Zelewski said that he acted independently of Fischer and intervened in the camp, which was originally managed by the civilian administration. He said that he had procured provisions, while hygiene was handled by Polish Red Cross, the Swiss handled supplies and the Polish administration in Cracow were given visiting rights. The insurgents, he said, were allowed to visit the camp before the surrender negotiations. A clue to what happened next came from his testimony:

Since there was no supply department attached to my staff and I had no supply organisations at my disposal, I had to hand over control to the civil administration but the question of efficiency was not affected... Finally I state that hundreds of thousands of civilians and tens of thousands of soldiers of Polish nationality owe their lives due to my sense of responsibility alone. For this, my humane victory over crime, Himmler gave me the reward in the form of a communication by a notary, that my brother Victor had died insane in the Boldeschwing Institution, near Bielefeld.<sup>47</sup>

In a final twist, Bach-Zelewski was recommended by Himmler for the Knights Cross, which listed his date of command from the 1<sup>st</sup> August 1944, and the success was based upon the latter's own report.<sup>48</sup> This remarkable story can only be measured against the figures from his diary, which presents another impression:

**Table 61: A casualty report for Warsaw 1944<sup>49</sup>**

GERMAN LOSSES		POLISH LOSSES	
Killed - officers	73	Identified killed	1,559
- NCOs & Men	1,453	Estimated killed	100,000
		Wounded	15,000
Wounded - officers	242	Prisoners	5 generals
- NCOs & Men	8,196		2,028 officers
			17,443

<sup>46</sup> George Bruce, *The Warsaw Uprising*, (London, 1972), p201.

<sup>47</sup> BZ-IMT, 29<sup>th</sup> January 1946.

<sup>48</sup> TVDB, p107.

<sup>49</sup> TVDB, p115.

		Evacuated Poles:	
		Work in Germany	79,023
		A.U (sic) <sup>50</sup>	61,856
		Not for work in G-G	135,830
		Others	3,503
		Sick	29,504

### The Slovakian Uprising

During the early days of the Warsaw Rebellion Himmler was concerned in a further large-scale anti-partisan campaign. On the 23 August, a black day that saw the loss of Paris and the surrender of Roumania, rebellion broke out in the small republic of Slovakia... This was still more dangerous situation than that of Warsaw, because the rebellion cut off the retreat of the routed German Eighth Army in Galicia... The pacification of Slovakia after the surrender of the main army of the rebels was not at first an out-and-out man-hunt.<sup>51</sup>

Depending upon which historian one reads, the Slovakian uprising lasted between two and four months.<sup>52</sup> Gottlob Berger was made commander of all forces for the suppression of the uprising. He was experienced in the politics and culture of Southeast Europe, and had recruited ethnic Germans from the region for the Waffen-SS, but did not appear to have the expertise for Bandenbekämpfung:

At 11 o'clock on the evening of 31 August [1944], I was called up from the Fuhrer's headquarters and told that I was to be prepared for a difficult job in the frontline. On the 1st of September, about 2 am, Fegelein was on the phone and told me that I was the German Commander in Chief in Slovakia. A military revolt had broken out and the situation was anything but clear. The Army Group Heinrici, which was about 550kms east of Bratislava, was fighting there with its right flank based on the Hungarian Ore Mountains, and was in great danger. In addition, there were 25,000 German children who had been housed in Czechoslovakia in Children's evacuation camps. I would receive further information in Vienna [sic].<sup>53</sup>

<sup>50</sup> The likely meaning of AU, is that it was an abbreviation for 'arbeitsunfähig', i.e. unfit for work.

<sup>51</sup> Reitlinger, 1956, pp377-378.

<sup>52</sup> Foot, 1976, pp 208-209. Foot suggested that the fighting was over by the 25<sup>th</sup> September with a few guerrillas surviving until the Red Army approached in April 1945. Reitlinger, *ibid*, 377-380, came to the view that the fighting was over by September 1944 but there was a longer term of pacification with over 18,000 arrests with just under half being Jewish in origin. Dr Karel Kratky and Dr Anronin Snejdarek, 'The Slovak Rising', Purnell's History of the Second World War, Number 78, Volume 7, pp 2157-2166. They saw the fighting in four phases that lasted until December when contact was made between the guerrillas and the advancing Soviet forces.

<sup>53</sup> USMT, Ministries Case 11, Berger's testimony, p6094.

Along with eight men of his staff, Berger set off for Vienna and arrived on the evening of 1<sup>st</sup> September. He was advised of the troops under his command:

At Himmler's orders, that is Keitel's, I would have one Tatra Division at my disposal; which was set up in the Silein area, and replacements from Bohemia and Moravia for the Waffen-SS in the strength of one reinforced infantry regiment, that is, 3,000 men, line guns, and everything that belonged [sic].<sup>54</sup>

According to French Maclean, the forces that were available to Berger were not inconsiderable.<sup>55</sup> Berger stated what the mission was:

The situation would not have been so bad if I had not found orders which were absolutely insane. The immediate disarmament of the [Slovak Army] was demanded of me; setting up labour battalions; the arrest of General Cacho; the safeguarding of President Tiso... Your honours, that for me as a soldier and as a general it was absolutely impossible, it would have been absolutely insane if, in such desperate military situations if I had tried to interfere in matters of internal politics and tried to take up, for instance, the Jewish question. The Slovak rising was not a Jewish rising but a military rising... There were no anti-Jewish operations – not at the time and Himmler's declaration that it was a Jewish rising is not true... I had an excellent relationship with the Catholic clergy, and I would immediately have spoiled my relationship with them if I carried out any anti-Jewish schemes... There were no Jews sent to Auschwitz [sic].<sup>56</sup>

He tried to appear totally incompetent in the eyes of Hitler and the rest of his entourage:

[O]n the 18th I was ordered to the Fuhrer's headquarters. There was very great tension there because I had not fulfilled a single one of the orders given by Adolf Hitler. I could not fulfil them because otherwise everything would have collapsed. There was a second battle. In the Zvolen area about 350 ethnic Germans were murdered. Something of this came to Hitler's ears and reprisals were ordered... I had been relieved from my post in Slovakia because I had once got very drunk and behaved disrespectfully and indecently...[sic]<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p6095

<sup>55</sup> Maclean, 1998, p 199. Berger deployed several Wehrmacht and Waffen-SS units to halt the revolt. On the northwest perimeter of rebel held territory was the army's Panzer Division "Tatra". This division consisted of about 6,000 troops and was reinforced by the 178<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. Due North of the rebellion was SS Battle Group Schaefer. It was made up of 1,200 troops of the 18<sup>th</sup> SS Division "Horst Wessel", and a further 1,200 soldiers from the 86<sup>th</sup> Infantry division. To the southwest was SS Regiment "Schill" composed mostly of troops from the SS training school Bohemia/Moravia. Due south was SS Battle Group "Wildner".

<sup>56</sup> USMT, Ministries Case 11, Berger's testimony, p6095

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, p6099.

However, before being removed, Berger was able to formulate a plan that undermined the partisans and made it easier for his replacement to conduct the pacification process:

When the revolt got properly under way, four Russian divisions attacked the Ducla Pass. In order to open a way for the Russian armies from the northeast into Slovakia. The Ducla Pass was held by an armoured division with unique courage. Then there was the Schäfer combat group. This marched from the Heinrici army group from East to West in the direction of Rosenberg... The combat group and division Schill, after detailed preparation under my personal leadership, on 14 Sept., took Kostelliani. During the night they advanced through Turk St.Martin and captured it. That cleared the railroad track, Rosenberg was captured...[sic]<sup>58</sup>

### Budapest

The speed of the Red Army's advances in 1944, forced Hitler's to desert him. In August 1944, Romania capitulated and then joined the Soviets in the war against Germany. In March 1944, the Germans had unleashed Operation Margarethe, invading their ally Hungary with four army corps, to ensure they remained in the war. In September 1944, Hitler was again concerned that Hungary was about to defect. To ensure Hungary remained loyal, Hitler sent his most uncompromising pair of political soldiers, Bach-Zelewski and Otto Skorzeny.<sup>59</sup> The consequences have become legend. The story told by Skorzeny after the war, was that Bach-Zelewski intended to destroy Budapest with the same siege artillery used in the destruction of Warsaw. According to Skorzeny suggested, Bach-Zelewski wanted to exact revenge on the Hungarians for their official complaint to Hitler over his use of Ukrainians in Warsaw. Therefore, Skorzeny ignored him, conducted a daring raid to kidnap Admiral Horthy's son and blackmail the father into remaining on the side of the Germans. Subsequently, Bach-Zelewski was sent back to Germany to prepare to command a large military formation.<sup>60</sup> Skorzeny probably complained about Bach-Zelewski for reasons of personal survival, as it seems his bravura left him when facing a criminal court.<sup>61</sup> It is most likely that Skorzeny's

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p6099.

<sup>59</sup> NA, T1270, role 1, frame 0997. The relationship between these two men became hostile once they were in American in captivity after the war. Skorzeny remained one of Bach-Zelewski's loyal subordinates in the last days of the war they fought together in Schwedt on the Oder.

<sup>60</sup> Otto Skorzeny, 1975 and Perry Pierik, *Hungary 1944-1945: the Forgotten Tragedy*, (Netherlands, 1996).

<sup>61</sup> During the Ardennes offensive, Hitler asked Skorzeny to conduct covert operations behind the American lines in US Army uniform. Skorzeny was not so brave that he would refuse an illegal order from Hitler. The Americans, were also, still seeking justice for the Malmedy incident when the Waffen-

planned subterfuge and the threat of destruction by Bach-Zelewski, was enough to force Horthy to remain loyal to Hitler. Bach-Zelewski was not wholly open on the subject, other than to mention that Hitler had given him the assignment for Budapest personally, his diary only shows his arrival in and departure from Budapest.<sup>62</sup> However, in providing evidence on behalf of the Eichmann Trial of 1961, he stated that he had been ordered by Hitler to go to Budapest to set up a military government. He believed it was through his urging that Admiral Horthy capitulated at 6.00am on the morning of the 16<sup>th</sup> October, 1944.<sup>63</sup> In November 1944, the IX<sup>th</sup> SS Corps took command of Budapest. The 8<sup>th</sup> SS Cavalry Division 'Florian Geyer' was one of the divisions of the corps, the last manifestation of the SS Cavalry Brigade that had tried to drown Jews in the Pripet Marshes in 1941. The Red Army surrounded the city of Budapest and on the 11<sup>th</sup> February, the last SS survivors tried to breakout and make their way west; it was a forlorn hope.

### III. The End of the Bandenkampfverbände

Then on the 29th [April 1945] fell the greatest blow of all. A telegram arrived which indicated that the staunch and trusted Himmler had joined Göring on the traitor list. It was like a deathblow to the entire assembly. Eitsch claims that men and women alike cried and screamed with rage, fear and desperation, all mixed into one emotional spasm. Himmler the protector of the Reich, now a traitor was impossible.<sup>64</sup>

The last six months of Bach-Zelewski's war not detailed in his diary, nor were they fully investigated after the war. He took leave following the Hungarian adventure, when, on the 8<sup>th</sup> November, Himmler, who had become a field commander of Army Group Upper Rhine, sent for him. He ordered Bach-Zelewski to take command of the 14<sup>th</sup> SS Corps who arrived at his new headquarters on the 10<sup>th</sup> November 1944. This was in the area of Baden-Baden where he was ordered to form a defensive line. The corps had a strength of 12,000 men supplied with captured Russian guns and the same siege artillery mentioned earlier. The combat units included 2<sup>nd</sup> SS-Police Regiment (with a heavy artillery company), one battalion of Grenzschutz and cadets from Police

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SS executed US Army prisoners of war. He eventually escaped from American captivity and ended up living as an exile in Spain as a civil engineer.

<sup>62</sup> BZ-USMT, 14<sup>th</sup> April 1947, and, TVDB, p116.

<sup>63</sup> Details of The Testimony of Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski', can be found on the Nizkor Project Website at, <http://www.nizkor.org/hweb/people/e/eichmann-adolf>.

<sup>64</sup> NA, IMT 3734-PS, Hanna Reitsch testimony of the last days in Hitler's bunker.

School Ettlingen. The staffs were made up of the same men from the Bandenkampfverbände. On the 4<sup>th</sup> January 1945, the corps took part in Operation Nordwind, the final and most southerly attack of Hitler's Ardennes Offensive. It had only limited success before the Americans drove them back. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> or 25<sup>th</sup> January 1945, Bach-Zelewski was sent east to defend his homeland. He again took his headquarters staff with him, this time to the 10<sup>th</sup> SS Corps in Pomerania.<sup>65</sup> Hitler's faith in Bach-Zelewski remained strong to the end as his comments to Keitel indicate, 'If Bach-Zelewski was here, I would be entirely at ease. He would scrape up prisoners of war, convicts, everything.'<sup>66</sup> He remained with the 10<sup>th</sup> SS Army Corps until February 1945, whereupon his last command became the Oder Corps, operating south of Stettin in a little town called Schwedt on the Oder. Here he was reunited with Skorzeny and his elite commandos, with the rest of the corps made up of all kinds of units including a Marine Division (Kriegsmarine). At the time of the capitulation, Bach-Zelewski was with Himmler at Freising in Schleswig-Holstein in Northern Germany, but he finally surrendered, or was caught, on the Austrian-Italian border, in August 1945.<sup>67</sup>

Ernst Rode spent the last days of the war in further intrigue. In one incident Ernst Kaltenbrunner and Otto Skorzeny were seemingly working together to take control of Southern Germany. According to Rode, Himmler had granted Kaltenbrunner authority to take control of SS affairs in the south. On the 22 April 1945, Rode was requested to attend a meeting with Kaltenbrunner in Aigen near Salzburg. During the meeting, it was disclosed that Karl Wolff had surrendered the German forces in Italy. The discussion turned to the collapse of Austria. Gottlob Berger, who was in Munich, was also alleging to have ownership of the similar authority to Kaltenbrunner, over the control of Southern Germany. According to Rode he told both men that he no longer accepted either of their authorisations and sent a message to that effect to Himmler. Instead Rode said he took Himmler's personal train and handed it over to the OKW to be used as a mobile headquarters in the south.<sup>68</sup> The following day Rode became entangled Göring's

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<sup>65</sup> NA, FMS, B-252, The 14<sup>th</sup> SS Corps: November-December 1944: 7 December 1946. signed by von dem Bach-Zelewski (Lieutenant General). The 10<sup>th</sup> SS Corps was formed of the Bandenkampfverbände along with the 5<sup>th</sup> Jäger, 8<sup>th</sup> Jäger, 163<sup>rd</sup> and 314<sup>th</sup> Infantry Divisions, all having participated in anti-partisan warfare.

<sup>66</sup> Reitlinger; 1956, p398.

<sup>67</sup> It did look as if Bach-Zelewski was attempting to escape down the 'rat line' through which many Nazis escaped allied justice.

<sup>68</sup> NA, IMT, T1270, reel 26, frames 793-806, Ernst Rode interrogation report 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1945.



last political intrigue. He was visited by one of Göring's adjutants, who wished to use the police telecommunications network, to send a message to Hitler in Berlin:

My Führer, according to the report of General Koller, I am afraid that you no longer have a free hand, but are encircled. Therefore, unless I hear from you by 22.00hrs, I shall assume full power.

Göring was arrested under Hitler's orders. According to Rode, he convinced several officers including Kaltenbrunner that it was not a good idea to execute Göring.

Meanwhile in the east the last SS-Police regiments were being destroyed in the final days of the war. A survivor of Kampfgruppe Hannibal, surrounded in Königsberg by the Red Army, left a statement of the end. The seven SS-Police Regiments most associated with Bandenbekämpfung, the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup>, and 36<sup>th</sup>, the three panzer companies, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup>, and the remains of a host of other police units went into Russian captivity.<sup>69</sup> Heinz Reinefarth, Göring, Daluge, Jeckeln, Skorzeny, Rode, Dirlwanger and Wolff joined Bach-Zelewski in allied captivity. Prützmann, Globocnik, Gottberg, and Himmler chose suicide. This spelled the end of the Bandenkampfverbände.

#### IV. War Crimes Jurisdiction

The German people must be enlightened on all the arrogance, conceit, pusillanimity and brutality which went into the SS uniform. The German people must learn what pigmies rattled about in the big black boots of the Rottenführers, Hauptscharführers, Sturmscharführers, and Obergruppenführers. They will demand in the future a show of worth, of religion, of honesty, of fundamental decency in a man before accepting him as leader.<sup>70</sup>

The Commando Order was one of the first Nazi policies to come under allied scrutiny and was declared illegal in two trials. The first case, the US Army against General of Infantry Anton Dostler, was the first execution of a senior German officer. At the time it made press headlines but was soon forgotten once the Nuremberg trials opened.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>69</sup> BA MA, RS4/1066, Kampfgruppe Hannibal. The statement also referred to the execution of several police officers by the Red Army including an Oberstleutnant Weissig hanged in 1946.

<sup>70</sup> USMT, Oswald Pohl et al Case four, pp24-25.

<sup>71</sup> Karel Margry, 'The Dostler Case', *After the Battle Magazine*, (London, 1996), Number 94, pp1-19. However, in 1996, the trial became the subject of a magazine article. The captured Americans had been members of a specialist team under the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), their purpose being to conduct missions of sabotage in the enemy's rear area. The team in question were to blow up a tunnel along the Genoa-La Spezia railway line on the northwest coast of Italy. The men were captured after a short fire

Unknown to commentators, there is more evidence available. A record of statements made by German officers prior to the war crimes trials remains in the National Archives in America.<sup>72</sup> Dostler and Oswald Pohl were overheard discussing the commando order and in particular the incident at La Spezia. At one point Dostler stated, 'I told Army, and left the decision to Army. I believed myself that they were saboteurs. Above all, I realised that they had been wearing uniforms.' It was an attempt to save himself as he went on to question why there had been no trial (which he had failed to administer) and to hide behind what was a Führer order anyway; 'But in any case they can't hold me responsible for an order I got from higher up.' He even admitted that the armed forces report (Wehrmachtsbericht) had stated that the men had been killed in battle. Oswald Pohl and Anton Dostler were the first and last men executed by the Americans for war crimes.

The trial against Colonel-General Nikolaus von Falkenhorst began on Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> July 1946, in Brunswick, Germany. The proceedings were intended to further expose the criminal intent of the Commando Order. On the 26 October 1942, Falkenhorst was heard to have said, 'If a man is saved for interrogation he must not survive for more than twenty-four hours.'<sup>73</sup> Falkenhorst was the German army's commander for the occupation of Norway, between 1940 and 1944. He had received Germany's highest award of the Knight's Cross. His interrogator Colonel Scotland passed comments about Falkenhorst which should be recalled:

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fight on the morning of the 24<sup>th</sup> March 1944. The OSS operatives were operating in the area of the 135<sup>th</sup> Festungsbrigade with three local fortress battalions. The brigade came under the LXXV Army Corps commanded by Dostler, who in turn was under the command of Army Group von Zangen covering Northern Italy. The German overall commander in Italy at this time was Field Marshal Albert Kesselring. Following the interrogation of the captives, requests for instructions were passed to Dostler's staff; local German officers. Dostler following a brief discussion with his chief of staff issued an order on the 25<sup>th</sup> March for the 15 men to be executed. The execution order was passed to a senior lieutenant of one of the fortress battalions, who requested an NCO in charge of civilian labour to dig the men's grave. In the early morning of the 26<sup>th</sup> March the execution process began with the formation of a 25-man firing squad and two officers from the fortress battalion. By 7.30am it was over, the captives were dispatched by firing squad and then each shot in the neck for certainty. They were then buried in a mass grave still in their uniforms. Two days later the German and Italian news broadcast the destruction of the unit in skirmish. Kesselring ordered further announcements to cease following a press statement stated that the Americans had killed a German guard.

<sup>72</sup> NA, IRR RG-319, 13 General Staff vol. IV, boxes 13 and 14, declassified 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1999 reference NND856013, file number XE001893, conversation recorded on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 1945 between Anton Dostler and Oswald Pohl.

<sup>73</sup> E.H.Stevens, *Trial of Nikolaus von Falkenhorst: Formerly Generaloberst in the German Army*, (London, 1949), pXIV.

Falkenhorst, who at the outbreak of the war had been a comparatively insignificant officer commanding a division in East Prussia, was perhaps the most selfish opportunist in the hierarchy of German generals... Demoralised, dejected and aged (Falkenhorst was then sixty-one years old, but looked seventy), he listened in silence as I reminded him of the ghastly deeds which had followed his zealous interpretation of Hitler's orders.<sup>74</sup>

The evidence left by Falkenhorst points toward the character of the German occupations outside of the Soviet Union. The Germans would immediately kill captured commandos, except in one case. Frogman, Petty Officer Evans, of the Royal Navy, was captured trying to escape from a failed attempt to sink the German battleship Tirpitz. He was handed over to the Gestapo as he tried to escape to Sweden. Colonel Scotland continued:

He was then transferred to Gestapo headquarters, where for nearly two weeks he was put on public exhibition in the vestibule of the building. Norwegians and Germans alike were invited to inspect the man, who was kept on display, day after day, with all his frogman's gear neatly set out on tables... When the "show" was over, Evans was put to death by the Gestapo. While the "show" was on, Falkenhorst paid a fifteen minute visit, gazing with the rest.<sup>75</sup>

#### Bach-Zelewski: the final act

It had always been my personal impression that the treatment of the civilian population and the methods of anti-partisan warfare in operational areas presented the highest political and military leaders with a welcomed opportunity of carrying out their plans, namely, the systematic extermination of Slavism and Jewry. Entirely independent of this, I always regarded these cruel methods as military insanity, because they only helped to make combat against the enemy unnecessarily more difficult.<sup>76</sup>

Unlike any other senior SS officer among Himmler's eastern commanders, Bach-Zelewski left ample oral (transcribed) interrogation evidence and testimonials from the Nuremberg interrogation process. Bach-Zelewski became an expert prosecution witness on behalf of the US Army chief prosecutor Brigadier Telford Taylor'.<sup>77</sup> Eventually he

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<sup>74</sup> Lt.Col. A.P. Scotland, *The London Cage*, (London, 1957), pp165-166.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, pp170-171.

<sup>76</sup> Telford Taylor, *The Anatomy of the Nuremberg Trials*, (London, 1993), p259.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, p259. 'Bach-Zelewski was in command of military operations waged with utter ruthlessness, including suppression of the Warsaw uprising in 1944. He was certainly no angel and did not claim to be, but he was thoroughly familiar with the army's conduct of the war on the Eastern Front and its involvement in war crimes, and he was willing to testify on those matters. Peter Calvocoressi and our interrogators believed that he would be as good as his word, and after participating in several interviews, I

became Taylor's tool to beat down any potential success on the part of the defence. Interestingly, Bach-Zelewski left several different impressions on the court, the judges saw in him a 'a mild and rather serious accountant.' The defendants took a less neutral viewpoint. Hermann Göring said, 'You won't see me bothering to ask such a swine any questions.'<sup>78</sup> Taylor was clearly pleased with the results from employing Bach-Zelewski, when he said:

Sincere or not, Bach-Zelewski's... response[s] epitomised the course and consequence of Nazism. It was quoted in the Tribunal's opinion, with direct relation to the charges against [Alfred] Rosenberg, the reputed philosophical sage of Nazism... Our presentation was treated well in the press, and generously complimented by our associates. Jackson was especially pleased by Bach-Zelewski's testimony. Press coverage of the affidavits was extensive; the New York Times printed my summation in its entirety, and the Washington Post editorialised that "Any lingering doubts" about the wisdom of indicting the German General Staff "should be relieved by the evidence now available".<sup>79</sup>

The story of Bach-Zelewski's involvement in the Nuremberg process raises many difficult questions. The prosecution interviewed him on many occasions and the defence at least twenty times, little of which has been made public.<sup>80</sup> Many of the most damning papers that would have discredited him, as a witness, were never allowed to be entered into the courts. There was a suspicion that he had been threatened with extradition to Poland if he did not work for the prosecution. It was the strangest quirk of fate that he later returned to Warsaw, under American protective immunity, to give evidence. He arrived on the 14th February 1947, and remained in Warsaw for four weeks. The defendants included Dr. Fischer, the Nazi Governor of Warsaw, and Otto Meisinger, the commander of the Warsaw security police. It is to the lasting credit of the Polish people that they honoured the agreement and returned Bach-Zelewski to the Americans.

Bach-Zelewski was not the only war criminal to escape extradition. Heinz Reinefarth was declared immune because the allies were not prepared to extradite him to Poland. The Poles had requested Heinz Reinefarth in 1947. He had in fact been one of five generals requested including Guderian, Rode, Lüttwitz and Vormann. The

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concluded that he should testify. Under staff rules I was required to clear this decision with Amen and Dodd (US prosecutors), with neither of whom I had much rapport. But I think they knew that Jackson (US Chief Prosecutor) would back me up, and they rather sourly accepted my decision.'

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, p259.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, p357.

<sup>80</sup> USMT, Hostage case 7, p8956.

Americans placed a protective veil over these men, declaring that they were due to stand trial and were therefore material witnesses. The American decision, made on the 21<sup>st</sup> November 1947, was confirmed in July 1948:

These five generals are outstanding German military personalities and have been utilised during the past two years by the Historical and Intelligence agencies in Europe to prepare detailed studies on German operations during the past war. In this capacity they have made positive valuable contribution to our intelligence effort on the USSR and satellites.<sup>81</sup>

### Self-justification and the Reconstruction of a career

The thing that most touched me in all this terror was the fact that they just let themselves be led to the slaughter like cattle, entirely without opposition.<sup>82</sup>

The central objective at the heart of Nazi and SS philosophy was the eradication of all Jews and Jewish culture. In this matter Bach-Zelewski used all his ingenuity to construct a defence to not only deny his role in the Nazi mission but to project himself as its victim. His story began with a recollection of the 1920s. The most consistent remark Bach-Zelewski made during all the tribunal proceedings was, 'I had to give up active service in 1924 when two of my sisters married Jews.'<sup>83</sup> We know little of these sisters, and if they really did marry Jews remain unknown. He said one of his sisters was a saleswoman who lived in Wertheim near Berlin and had married a poor Jew. The other had married a successful businessman who apparently had all the appearance of a 'Nordic' man.<sup>84</sup> He alleged they lived in Bialystok with their family.<sup>85</sup> In recounting these stories Bach-Zelewski had in fact constructed an effective defence, a mix between truths and lies. He reconstituted the events of 1935, stating his disagreement was with Gauleiter Koch of Königsberg.<sup>86</sup> This was an ongoing row, he alleged, all to do with Koch's corrupt administration that just happened to explode during a speech by Schacht. Later referring to 1939, when he became a central figure in the SS race and

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<sup>81</sup> NA, IMT, RG319, file marked 'Extradition of Former German Officers to Poland. The Americans released him into the British zone of occupation. The Americans were reluctant to extradite him on security grounds and wanted the British to confirm this decision themselves.

<sup>82</sup> BZ-IMT, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1946, noticeably after he had been granted immunity from extradition.

<sup>83</sup> BZ-IMT, 27<sup>th</sup> November 1945.

<sup>84</sup> IWM, IMT, Bach-Zelewski, interrogation, No. 1975, 14<sup>th</sup> April 1947.

<sup>85</sup> BZ-IMT, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1946.

<sup>86</sup> The incident is discussed in detail in chapter 2.

resettlement process in Poland, he assumed opposition to Himmler.<sup>87</sup> Working together with Gauleiter Wagner in Silesia, he stated that they had composed a paper on the inadvisability of building Jewish ghettos. However, their prospects had been dashed when Himmler had ordered it necessary to secure the army, because the Jews were opposed to National Socialism, and conducted themselves as partisans.

Throughout his interrogations, Bach-Zelewski liked to bring the focus of the court or interrogator's attention to his 'military' experiences.<sup>88</sup> Later his stories began to take on a bizarre character. Indeed Bach-Zelewski told several different versions of the same story, which was all the more intriguing because after some time they began to include himself as a victim.<sup>89</sup> The decision by the Nazis to commit genocide was a particular example. This story begins with the discussion between Himmler and Bach-Zelewski prior to Barbarossa, referred to by several historians, in this quote from Höhne:

As early as January 1941, at a meeting at Wewelsburg, Himmler had confided to SS Gruppenführer Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski that the German master plan for the East necessitated the elimination of thirty million Slavs.<sup>90</sup>

The timing of this meeting and content of this meeting was declared by Bach-Zelewski and was written into the court record. However, on the subject of genocide he had to await an opportunity to change the emphasis of his defence. It came on the 15 January 1946, as the interrogations gravitated toward the extermination process, Bach-Zelewski suddenly changed his name from the 'von dem Bach' as he had been known since 1940, to von dem Bach-Zelewski.<sup>91</sup> It was a timely move for by the later stages of the US Army war crimes process, Bach-Zelewski would ramble about his life, and in one case, even discussed his Polish ancestry:

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<sup>87</sup> Discussed in chapter 3. See also Machlejd, 1961.

<sup>88</sup> USMT, Hostage case 7, p8913. 'My first assignment in the Second World War was in 1941 at the beginning of the Russian campaign. There I was HSSPF for Central Russia and was under the command of Rear Army Area Central Russia of General Schenckendorff which was mainly assigned for the combating of partisans.'

<sup>89</sup> BZ-IMT, 27 November 1945, 'I was opposed to Himmler's exaggerated racial and Germanic ideas as early as 1934 when his pronouncements were becoming clearer and clearer. At the beginning of the Polish campaign and after Himmler's speech at the Wewelsburg I was filled with the profoundest misgivings because I saw that my national status would be questioned by reason of my half Slav descent and my Jewish relations.' BZ-IMT, 23 March 1946, he said, '...not the Jews but the Slavs.'

<sup>90</sup> Höhne, 1969, p290.

<sup>91</sup> BZ-IMT, 15<sup>th</sup> January 1946. He was inadvertently assisted by a change of interrogator allowing him to elaborate his 'real name'.

My family comes from Western Prussia. They have been living there for centuries. It is of course natural that, based on the Versailles treaty, many of the members of my own family who remained in Western Prussia at the time became Poles. That is to say, they became Polish citizens. Therefore, I realise that I felt that in the individual national groups, even my own family, some of the families were found to be racially superior or of value and they were permitted to keep their property and were declared Germans upon my instigation with the Reichsführer-SS. Others again were found to be a mixture of a race. Again there were others who had been Poles since 1918 and who, in the meantime, had served in the Polish Army who now, of course, stuck to their own and they wanted to remain Polish citizens. These Poles were either taken to KZ [concentration camp] or sent to the Government-General. I also remember another instance of a cousin of mine who had the same name as I. He was a Catholic priest and he worked in Western Prussia and he was sent to a KZ for the very simple fact that he was a Pole [sic].<sup>92</sup>

According to Bach-Zelewski the killing actions in the Pripet marshes went against his original plans. His excuses included his Jewish brother-in-law and family who just happened to live in Bialystok. He had warned them to leave, which apparently they did, but then returned after a month, believing that the Nazis were like Russian pogroms, deadly but short-lived.<sup>93</sup> He, allegedly told the Chief Rabbi of Bialystok that reprisals were to be put into action because Himmler had blamed the Russian scorched earth policy on the Jews. He then recommended that the Jews of Bialystok should attempt to get away. At that point Bach-Zelewski asked the interrogator, 'why have no Rabbis been giving testimony?'<sup>94</sup> He said he had offered to keep the frontlines open on either side of the Pripet marshes. The Jews were then to flee to the marshes because there were no German soldiers there and they would be safe; they could then move through to the Red Army lines. The story is hardly believable since such a trek would have taken weeks if not months. The escape of the Jews however failed because of a surprise counterattack by the Red Army, which sent a cavalry force to destroy German rear areas.<sup>95</sup> He was therefore forced to close the gap and the killings began under Einsatzgruppen commander Artur Nebe. He then added that mentioning the Pripet marshes incident had turned him into traitor to the German people, but he knew that some day the story would surface. To embellish the story, he explained that the house of

<sup>92</sup> USMT, The RuSHa case 8, p396.

<sup>93</sup> BZ-IMT, 23 March 1946.

<sup>94</sup> BZ-IMT, 25 March 1946.

<sup>95</sup> TVDB confirms the attack of August 1941.

Rabbi Barnovdez' had been used as his headquarters.<sup>96</sup> Most Jews, he alleged, were reluctant to leave, especially those with money or wealth, and only the working class Jews had left with the Red Army.<sup>97</sup>

Bach-Zelewski then went on to suggest he had had a 'Jew' working for him in the Minsk hotel, another of his headquarters. This person made the fires and did other menial tasks but was denounced by a Russian chambermaid because of his 'special benefits'.<sup>98</sup> His diary rarely referred to the subject of the Jews. In one entry for November 1942, opened by referring to the behaviour of von Gottberg who was enthusiastic, dynamic and highly motivated, but had allowed wild actions against Jews to take place. Such actions undermined the 'honour of the soldiers'. Some time later Bach-Zelewski met with Reichskommissar Kube and discussed the Jewish problem:

[He] believed the problem was historical and that it was the wandering nature of the Jews and religion that was the basic ideological issue. That it was now proven that the Jews were the friends of or even the bearers of Bolshevism, and that they had caused the collapse of 1918. They had done this by ruling the media which had in turn undermined the people. Today the Germans believed that the war was initiated by the Jews. That as anti-Semites they had taught the nation of the dangers of Judaism. That emigration was the solution, that the soldiers wanted a decent war but there were still the powers of evil that could affect all men. On the one hand he saw it as a life and death struggle but on the other there was the purity of his conscience and the natural powers of hate. He recognised the killing of women and children was a crime, it had to be actively prevented or it would happen anyway. With the lies of 1914-18, the sadism of individuals, with a clear conscience he had sided with humanity but that even this had led to hate.<sup>99</sup>

After the war crimes process Bach-Zelewski appear to felt he was immune from prosecution. It was ill-judged as he admitted lying at Nuremberg and even confessed to remaining 'Hitler's man. He was arrested in the 1950s and rearrested again in 1961, this time receiving a sentence of life imprisonment. Ironically he was found guilty of murdering his SS colleague during the Röhm Putsch. In spite of this record of lies, his testimony is still referred to in serious academic work. To the very end he continued to

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<sup>96</sup> BZ-IMT, 25 March 1946.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> BZ-IMT, 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1946. Presumably, this led to the demise of the Jewish servant. There was no reference to such a person in his diary.

<sup>99</sup> TVDB, p61.



twist a tale of deceit, half-truths and lies.<sup>100</sup> It is Hannah Arendt's term the 'banality of evil', that is so fitting to the case of Bach-Zelewski.<sup>101</sup>

## V. Expunging the Record of Bandenbekämpfung

A soldier, upon whose life an attempt may be made in the most dastardly manner, sees "red" and reacts differently from a pettifogging prosecutor or judge behind the protective cover of his writing desk.<sup>102</sup>

The SS had destroyed many of its records, including those from the KSRFSS, and the Bandenkampfverbände. The destruction process took place under the guise of saving records for the Waffen-SS archive in Schloss Sasmuk, near Kolin.<sup>103</sup> Whether this was part of the routine destruction of records that followed from the Red Army's Operation Bagration is unclear. The significance of the records comes from their origin. Virtually all of the papers were those of the HSSPF activity reports, some dating back to June 1943. Significantly, they included all of those regions where significant ghetto clearances and killing actions of Jews took place. In terms of what was to be kept, the list included all maps, daily combat reports from 1943 and 1944, and the major reports about Kaminski, Kolpak (Kovpak) and the Druhshina (V-Männer). They also included all the railway reports, and only Operation Heinrich of all the large-scale operations. In 1946, Bach-Zelewski told interrogators at Nuremberg that the files had been buried in East Prussia and that he was prepared to retrieve them if it would help his case, knowing full well that they had been destroyed.<sup>104</sup>

The post war influence of General Franz Halder on the history of the partisan war has been considerable. He became the chief consultant to the US Army's Historical Branch's Foreign Military Study programme. Hitler had sacked Halder in the summer

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<sup>100</sup> Details of The Testimony of Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski', can be found on the Nizkor Project Website at, <http://www.nizkor.org/hweb/people/e/eichmann-adolf>. He was asked if he knew Bruno Streckenbach and replied, 'I cannot remember an SS-Führer called Streckenbacher or Streckenbach, as far as the period of the War is concerned. I remember vaguely that there was a Brigadeführer Streckenbach who once led an SS Brigade on the Russian Front. I did not have any closer acquaintance with him.' As we saw in chapter four they both were at the meeting of the 9<sup>th</sup> July 1942. They also worked together on the Saybuscher Aktionen in Poland in 1939.

<sup>101</sup> Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A report on the Banality of Evil*, (USA, 1963)

<sup>102</sup> Kesselring, 1947, 'As a whole, these Guerrilla bands were a motley crew, made up of soldiers of the allies, Italians, Balkan nations, also German deserters, male and female elements of the population of diverse occupations and ages, with greatly varying moral conceptions lacking any unity based on mutual ethical standards.' p7.

<sup>103</sup> NA, T175, roll 222, series of documents dated from 10<sup>th</sup> July 1944.

<sup>104</sup> BZ-USMT, 14 April 1946.

of 1942, at the time of the introduction of the Bandenbekämpfung directive. Halder himself had issued the Jagdkommando order as one of his last acts as chief of staff. Halder ensured that Bach-Zelewski, Himmler and Bandenbekämpfung were written out of the 'official' history. The terms 'partisan' and 'anti-partisan war' were reinstated almost as if everything that occurred after he had left was wiped away. He ensured that Bandenbekämpfung was submerged into a rewritten history of the partisan war. He did this by collaborating with Bach-Zelewski who was asked to write a study 14<sup>th</sup> SS corps on the western front. Rode was asked to write a report on the KSRFSS which ensured that its role was specific to police operations and therefore removed from the 'military history'. Finally he asked those who were involved in Bandenbekämpfung to write reports, however irrelevant, to ensure there was a comprehensive view of partisan warfare. One example of this comes from one of the few notes he added to a paper concerning the partisan campaign:

According to an agreement with the Historical Division General (ret) A.L. Ratcliffe [note biographical appendix] a short study about "Lessons Learned from the Partisan War in Russia". In several valuable contributions General Ratcliffe has proved his good ability of observation and clear judgement of the Russian as an enemy. He inquires whether the Historical Division is interested in this study, otherwise he intends offering it to the Swiss Military Journal. The work does not bring anything essentially new as the author absolutely realises. But, because of its limitation to principles and clear distinction of the essentials I consider it valuable and believe that I can recommend the purchase of this study to the Historical Division.

Signed Franz Halder.<sup>105</sup>

Ratcliffe was only one of many. Halder like Bach-Zelewski had been placed in an exceptional position for a prisoner. Together they had deliberately expunged the record of Bandenbekämpfung and the Bandenkampfverbände from history.

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<sup>105</sup> Alexander Ratcliffe, FMS P-055c, 'Lessons Learned From the Partisan War in Russia', 1952. This is an interesting report because although undated it shows on its front piece that the US Army were running the Partisan Warfare Project. Today this report appears quite ridiculous and wrapped up in Cold War rhetoric. At one point Ratcliffe recommends to an army (presumably American) fighting in the east: 'To European minds Russia is a sinister land, especially after the events of the last few years. Therefore, through the medium of lectures, films and reading matter, officers and men should be given a reasonably clear and accurate idea of what awaits them in the Eastern theatre of war with respect to the peculiarities of nature, climate and the inhabitants. The hopelessness of the vast Russian expanses, the severity of the Asiatic winter and the endlessness of the Eastern forests call for strong hearts. The additional strain of a merciless partisan war will be more easily borne if the fear of the unknown has been overcome.'

## VI. Summary

2 July 1944: He said at the end November will be the conclusion; he had a good word: We had now not three, but five fronts: Russia, France, Italy, also the home-front of the bombing attacks and the bandit-front... 5 July 1944: Wehrmacht news report for the 2 July, During several clean-up operations inside an area of France 80 terrorists were liquidated. On the 3 July several terrorist-groups were dealt with in a fight. Pay attention "terrorists" so called franc-tireurs: Bandits. Pay attention we disparage them, pressurise them, they are outside the normal rules of military behaviour. Not unusually they want to liquidate them [sic].<sup>106</sup>

The history of the Bandenbekämpfung was horrific, even by the standards of the Nazi regime. The last year of its practise fully endorsed the destruction Hitler wished to exact as his empire collapsed. We have become accustomed to believe the horrors of Nazism were lessened as the war neared its end. This chapter proves it worsened. The destruction of Warsaw was matched only by the enslavement of its population. No other capital city was so completely devastated by the Nazis. The war against the Jews was also vigorously continued as seen in the Slovak Uprising. The wanton destruction was not practised; it seems, by brave men. The collapse of Germany was precipitated by the senior SS officers of the Bandenkampfverbände planning their escape from allied justice. Once in captivity none of them had the courage to own up to their deeds. Sadly, they succeeded in their efforts to avoid justice and many survived the war to pursue successful careers. Bandenbekämpfung was not put on trial and its victims never received justice. Consequentially, this security scheme, embraced by so many within German society, will for a long time remain a lasting shame.

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<sup>106</sup> Victor Klemperer, *To the Bitter End: The Diaries of Victor Klemperer 1942-45*, vol II, (London, 1998), p405.

### **Conclusion**

[B]y the end of the Second World War everybody knew that technical developments in the instruments of violence had made the adoption of 'criminal' warfare inevitable. It was precisely the distinction between soldier and civilian, between army and home population, between military targets and open cities, upon which the Hague Conventions definitions of war crimes rested, that had become obsolete.<sup>1</sup>

This study of *Bandenbekämpfung* has proven what a sizeable policy it was, with many avenues remaining unexplored. This is not surprising given its links and congruence with mainstream Nazi policies, many of which were enacted prior to its own instigation. In common with all security policies it was intended to protect, secure and enhance the implementation of these other national policies. In this sense it was a perfect mirror reflecting at any one time a particular policy through its daily routine. From this viewpoint it can be easily mistaken as an adjunct to such policies as genocide or resettlement, rather than being recognised for what it actually was. In this respect it was as much Himmler's platform to extend his powerbase as it was for Hitler to realise his dreams of *Lebensraum*. In practise it also suited the armed forces in granting both access to manpower and enhancing training. For the civilian authorities on the edge of the war it offered an opportunity to participate beyond their crucial but routinely predictable contribution to the war effort. Railwaymen, state foresters, construction workers were given licence to hunt down bandits. Rarely has such a security policy embraced so large a spectrum of a society at war. *Bandenbekämpfung* was a policy that perfectly suited the next phase of total war, escalation of the conflict into the occupied territories. We would, however, be mistaken to believe that it was a radical departure from tradition.

*Bandenbekämpfung* was a Nazi euphemism for the combating of guerrillas and partisans, and well-organised groups of resistance. It was a policy congruent to Nazi racial programmes (genocide and resettlement), and had the additional task of securing the economic exploitation of the occupied territories. During the Franco-Prussian War, the Prussians introduced a peculiar political-military security structure, the *Etappe*. This system gradually developed a peculiar military administration, bureaucracy and culture. During the Second World War Hitler dispensed with the concept of the *Etappe* and

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<sup>1</sup> Arendt, 1963, p256.

imposed a series of measures in an effort to find the correct solution to secure his schemes for eastern colonisation (Lebensraum). Following the disastrous Russian winter campaign of 1941-42, the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich and the growth of allied commando raids and Soviet partisan incursions, Hitler introduced the doctrine of Bandenbekämpfung in 1942, commanded by Heinrich Himmler. By 1944 the Bandenkampfverbände, as it became known, had also formed its own distinctive bureaucratic culture.

Bandenbekämpfung, in its purest form, was a highly aggressive counter-insurgency policy, but loaded by fanatical genocidal racialism and instilled within a harsh economic mission. Even in the last days of the war when the decision was beyond German control, Bandenbekämpfung was still fully implemented without remorse. Conceptually, it was also founded upon the notion of preventing a breakdown of inner security, a means to avoid a return to the days of 1918. This also made it a policy of social control, through coercion of the occupied nations. In the end Bandenbekämpfung managed to stave off major internal revolt but could not prevent the national collapse of Nazism.

This thesis has presented an interpretation as to the reasons for the development of Bandenbekämpfung. Initially, Bandenbekämpfung was the means to securing the Nazi colonial policy of Lebensraum. In this context it continued the punitive practice of the annihilation of Jews and political opponents as symbols of resistance to German rule. At the same time it became an agency by which Himmler engineered the SS-Police establishment into greater prominence within the overall war effort. Bandenbekämpfung was a shield behind which the SS continued the process of militarising the police, begun in 1936. From a broader perspective, it was a general operational policy that routinely allowed all the armed forces (including the SS) a high degree of freedom and flexibility in the employment of counter-insurgency measures; applied to all fronts and theatres of the war. Thus the armed forces were no longer constrained by the laws of war. Finally, it was a cost effective instrument for the eradication of political and racial opponents within occupied countries. The conclusion of this thesis is that Bandenbekämpfung was more than just a counter-insurgency policy; it was a Nazi security policy.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms

Appendix 2: German Rank Structures

Appendix 3: Dramatis Personae

Appendix 4: Maps

## Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms

**Abteilung:** Battalion or Detachment.

**Allgemeine-SS:** The General SS and central part of the SS, composed mainly of part-time volunteers.

**Bagration:** Soviet name for the 1944 summer offensive.

**Banden:** bandit.

**Bandenbekämpfung:** bandit fighting or combating banditry.

**Bandenkampfverbände:** organization for the combating of banditry.

**Bandenverdächtige:** bandit suspects.

**Bandenkampfvorschrift:** bandit orders.

**Barbarossa:** code name for the German invasion of Russia - 22 June 1941.

**Batl.:** Battalion.

**BdO:** Befehlshaber der Ordnungspolizei, field or regional commander of the uniformed police.

**BdS:** Befehlshaber der Sicherheitspolizei field or regional commander of the security police.

**CdO:** Chef der Ordnungspolizei.

**Einsatzgruppen:** Action Group, SS/SD killing team assigned to murder Jews, Gypsies and others deemed undesirable under Nazi racial policies.

**Einsatzkommando:** Action Commando, SS/SD killing team organic to an Einsatzgruppen.

**Ergänzungstelle:** Recruiting centre.

**Fallschirmjäger:** Paratrooper.

**Feldgendarmarie:** Military Police.

**Feldkommandantur:** Regional military government office.

**FHO:** Fremde Herre Ost; Foreign Armies East. The organization for intelligence gathering in the East.

**FHQ:** Führerhauptquartier – Hitler's headquarters.

**Franc-tireur or Frank-Tireur:** the name of French guerrillas during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870.

**Freikorps:** Free Corps initially the para-military formations following the First World War that fought against Communists in Germany, Austria and the Baltic States. Later the Freikorps were as sub-Nazi units in territories under the political disputes that led to the Second World War (i.e. Danzig Freikorps).

**Freischärler:** the freedom fighters (guerrillas) that rose up against Napoleon during the War of Liberation in Prussia, 1813.

**Freiwillige:** volunteers.

**Frühlingsfest:** 'Spring Festival' - anti-partisan operation in Byelorussia during April 1944.

**Führer:** Adolf Hitler or a leader or officer.

**Führerbefehl:** Führer Order.

**Führererlass:** Führer Decree or Edict.

**Gauleiter:** District Leader of the Nazi Party responsible for administering a region or district (Gau).

**Gebirgsjäger:** Mountain soldier.

**Generalgouvernement:** General Government of Poland occupied rather than annexed by Germany.

**Generalstab:** Chief of Staff.

**Gestapo:** Geheime Staatspolizei; Secret State Police.

**Guerillakrieg:** guerrilla warfare.

**Hilfswillige or Hiwi:** Russian auxiliaries serving with German units on the Eastern Front.

**Höhere SS- und Polizeiführer or HSSPF:** Higher SS and Police Leader.

**HHSSPF:** Supreme SS- and Police Leader for Italy, a rank that only applied to Karl Wolff.

**Ia:** operations officer.

**Ib:** In the German army, the Second General Staff officer (Supply).

**Ic:** In the German army, the Third General Staff officer (Intelligence).

**Kampfgruppe:** Battle group.

**Kdo:** HQ detachment.

**Kommandantur:** Garrison headquarters.

**Kommandostab RFSS (KSRFSS):** Command Staff RFSS Headquarters staff of the Reichsführer-SS in the field.

**Konzentrationslager or KZ:** Concentration Camp.

**Kp.:** Company.

**Kripo:** Kriminalpolizei; Criminal Police.

**Kugelblitz:** German anti-partisan operation in the Surazh Rayon of Byelorussia in February 1943.

**Landespolizei:** State Police.

**Landeschützen:** a Local Defence Force or a unit of Landwehr.

- Landser:** Term for the common German soldier.
- Landsturm:** German reservists aged over 39.
- Landwehr:** German reservists up to age 39.
- Ldsch.:** Landeschützen.
- Lebensraum:** Living Space. The Nazi concept for eastern colonialism.
- Legion:** A German military formation composed of foreigners or volunteers.
- NSDAP or NS:** National Socialist Party, Nazi Party or National Socialism.
- NSKK:** National Sozialistisches Kraftfahr-Korps, Nazi Motor Corps.
- OFK or Oberfeldkommandantur:** Administrative headquarters in occupied territory.
- OKW:** Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, German High Command of the Armed Forces.
- Organisation Todt or OT:** Organization Todt a construction agency founded by Reich Minister for Armaments. Originally founded by Fritz Todt but later under Albert Speer.
- Ordnungspolizei or Orpo:** Order Police, the regular uniformed police.
- Ostbataillonen:** Battalions made up of Eastern volunteers.
- Osttruppen:** The Eastern Troops that volunteered for the Ostbataillone.
- Partisanen:** partisan
- Partisanenkrieg:** partisan warfare.
- Partisanenüberfall:** partisan operations.
- Polizei:** Police.
- Qu.:** Quartiermeister or Quartermaster.
- Reichsarbeitsdienst or RAD:** Reich Labour Service.
- Reichsdeutsche:** German citizens residing in Germany.
- Reichskommissar:** The chief administrative officers of German occupied territories.
- Reichskommissariat Ostland:** Civilian bureaucracy charged with administering Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Byelorussia.
- Reichskommissariat Ukraine:** Civilian bureaucracy charged with administering the Ukraine and occupied southern Russia.
- Reichsministerium:** Reich Ministry.
- Rückwärtigen Heeresgebiet or RHG:** Rear Area Command. This was the corps-level organization to which the German security divisions were administratively subordinated.
- Reichsjägermeister/Reichsforstmeister or RJM/RFM:** the forestry and hunting service.
- Russkaya Osvoboditelnaya Nadodnaya Armia or RONA:** Russian National Liberation Army (Russian), anti-partisan unit formed by Bronislaw Kaminski in the Kursk-Orel region, the *Kaminski Brigade*.
- Reichssicherheitshauptamt or RSHA:** Main Office of State Security.
- Rasse- und Siedlungs-Hauptamt or RuSHA:** SS Main Office for Race and Settlements.
- Sicherungsdivision or SichD:** Security Division.
- Sicherungsregiment or SichR:** Security Regiment.
- Schule:** School.
- Schutzmannschaften or Schuma:** Auxiliary units, gendarmerie composed Eastern Europeans, Russians and Ukrainians recruited by the Germans and used to combat partisans in the East.
- Schutztruppen:** The Imperial colonial troops raised in the colonies from the indigenous population.
- Sicherheitsdienst or SD:** Security Service, SS intelligence service, which in 1944 assumed control of all German foreign intelligence.
- Sicherungs:** Security.
- Sicherheitspolizei or Sipo:** Security Police controlled by the SS.
- Sonderkommando:** Special command an *Einsatzkommando*, operating in a civil government area.
- SS:** Schutzstaffel formal name of the SS.
- Volksdeutsche:** Ethnic or racial Germans. Persons of German blood but non-German citizenship residing outside the Reich; considered by the Nazis to be part of the German *volk* (race).
- Wasserschutzpolizei,** the Prussian river and coastal police force.
- Wach-Bataillon or WB:** Watch Battalion or Guard Battalion.
- Wehrmacht:** Armed forces.
- Wehrmachtführungsstab:** Armed Forces Operations Staff.
- Weisung:** Directive.
- Wirtschaft:** Economy.
- Zitadelle:** Citadel (German). Code name for the unsuccessful German offensive in July 1943 against Soviet forces occupying the *Kursk Salient*.



## Appendix 2: German Rank Structures

RANKS/FORCE	ARMY	SS <sup>1</sup>	POLICE <sup>2</sup>	REICHSFORSTAMT
Generals ranks	Generalfeldmarschall	Reichsführer-SS		Reichsforstmeister
	Generaloberst	Oberstgruppenführer	Chef der Orpo	Gauforstmeister
	General der Infanterie	Obergruppenführer	General der Polizei	Oberlandforstmeister
	Generalleutnant	Gruppenführer	Generalleutnant	Kreisforstmeister
	Generalmajor	Brigadeführer	Generalmajor	Landforstmeister
			Polizeipräsident	
Field Officers	Oberst	Standartenführer	Oberst	
			Regierungsdirektor	
	Oberstleutnant	Oberführer	Oberstleutnant	Oberforstmeister
	Major	Sturmabführer	Major	Forstmeister
Captains	Hauptmann	Hauptsturmführer	Hauptmann	Forstassessor
	Rittmeister			Forstamtmann
Lieutenants	Oberleutnant	Obersturmführer	Oberleutnant	Oberförster
	Leutnant	Untersturmführer	Leutnant	
			Polizeimeister	
Senior NCOs	Stabsfeldwebel	Sturmscharführer		Revierförster
	Oberfeldwebel	Hauptscharführer	Polizeihauptwachtmeister	
	Feldwebel	Oberscharführer	Polizeioberwachtmeister	
Junior NCOs	Unterfeldwebel	Scharführer	Polizeiwachtmeister	Förster
	Unteroffizier	Unterscharführer		Unterförster
Men	Stabsgefreiter	Stabsrottenführer		
	Obergefreiter	Rottenführer		
	Gefreiter	Sturmann		Hilfsförster
	Oberschütze	SS- Oberschütze		
	Schütze	SS-Schütze	Hilfspolizisten	Forstaufseher

These are only the main ranks, there were many others that would make this table impractical.

The Reichsforstamt during wartime was organised into four main departments:

- Gemeinde Forstdienst (General Forestry Service);
- Privat Forstdienst (Private Forestry Service);
- Heeres Forstdienst (Army Forestry Service);
- Luftwaffe Forstdienst (Air Force Forestry Service).

The Reichsforstamt had its own particular ranks such as:

Hegeringsfuhrer (local surveyor)

Stabsleiter beim Reichsjägermeister (Chief of Staff to National Hunting Master);

<sup>1</sup> All SS ranks began with the initials SS (SS-Obergruppenführer).

<sup>2</sup> All Police general ranks concluded with 'der Polizei' (Generalleutnant der Polizei).

### Appendix 3: Dramatis Personae

This is not intended as an exhaustive list of all the men studied during this research, but just some further details of some significant officers. At the end there is a list of the participants on Schenckendoff's 1941 partisan field course.

**Gottlob Berger.** It was Berger's ideas that changed the direction of SS recruitment, away from the strict racial 'blood and soil' practices formulated by Walter Darré in the 1930s. Berger later became Himmler's liaison officer within the civil administration in Russia. During the First World War he had been wounded severely and he ended the war with a distinguished record. Between 1919 and 1921 he was involved in the political troubles of Baden-Württemberg. He used his military skills to break the electrical workers strike which had been close to overwhelming the local Schutzpolizei.<sup>1</sup> On the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1938, he became head of all SS recruitment (SS-Ergänzungsamt). On the 26<sup>th</sup> September 1939, he began forming self-defence units (paramilitary militias) in Poland. They came under the command of the Ordnungspolizei and the chief of the police and were the beginning of the foreign police forces.

**Kurt Bethke,** was born in 1903 in Benz in Germany. He had received a normal education, was married with three children. In 1919, he started work as a state clerical assistant. In 1924, he volunteered to become a police officer, in the Schutzpolizei. In October, he was sent to Treptow police school and a year later he joined a police platoon (Bereitschaft) in Stettin as a Unterwachtmeister. Bethke's promotions began to take shape as he moved through the ranks to Oberwachtmeister in 1931. In 1936, he undertook the examinations for entry into the Kriminalpolizei, becoming a Kriminal Assistant. During his probation period, he was assigned to Köslin where he was promoted again. In 1937 under the police amalgamations, he stated that he was transferred to the Gestapo, whereupon he was transferred again in June 1941. Bethke was posted as Kriminal Kommissar in Schwerin. From June to August 1941 he began to investigate the problems arising between German and Polish communities. His tasks included espionage in captured armament factories and sexual relations between the races. Since November 1941, Criminal Commissar, Kurt Bethke, had been posted to Thorn (Poland) where he participated in securing the railway junctions in proximity to Hitler's eastern headquarters. His department had been assigned to cases concerning the Polish resistance movement. Since 1940, gangs of Polish resistors and criminal gangs (actual bandits with no political allegiances) alongside German army deserters, collected in the Tucheler Heide [heath], and began terrorising the local population. Full-scale search and destroy operations took place as the police forces attempted to seek out the hideouts.

**Kurt Daluge,** was born on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 1897, in Kreuzburg in the Oberschlesien, into an evangelical family. He took his Realgymnasium exams in 1916 under the special rules for young men wishing to join the army. After the war he attended the Technische Hochschule in Berlin where he undertook a degree in engineering. Between 1919 and 1923, he was involved in the para-military politics of the revolutionary and early Weimar period. In 1922 he joined Freikorps Rossbach and

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<sup>1</sup> Reference given by Major Ruoff commander of the Einwohnwehr (Written in 1934). [Ruoff later rose to command the 17<sup>th</sup> Army in the Kuban and the Crimea (1943-44) as a Colonel-General.]

remained with them until 1923. He was eventually executed by the Czechoslovakian justice system in 1946. He is one of the leading figures identified in chapter two.

**Walter Frevert**, begun the war as a reserve lieutenant.<sup>2</sup> He had been born on 13<sup>th</sup> October 1897, in Hamm (Westfahlen), a protestant by religion. Frevert had followed a career as Forstmeister (master-forester) in Battenberg. He was married with one child. His registration as a reserve officer dated back to 1936. He had been a volunteer in the First World War joining the reserve battalion of the 11<sup>th</sup> Artillery Regiment on the 21 June 1915. He became an NCO in April 1916 and in November of that year he was promoted as Lieutenant of Reserve. Twenty years later he was called up to the army's 29<sup>th</sup> Artillery Regiment in Korbach. His war experience prior to joining the battalion began in Poland in which he was continually in combat until the 27<sup>th</sup> September 1939. He was part of the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division during the opening operations against Russia. Then, on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1941, he undertook operations in the forest of Białowieża, which lasted 20 days. In a letter 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1942, one of Göring's adjutants wrote to General of Artillery Keitel (Field Marshal Keitel's brother), who was in charge of officer personnel, requesting Frevert's release from his horse drawn artillery regiment to an unnamed reserve battalion in Suwalki. He had been seriously ill, having suffered a cranial nerve injury, having had an operation on it in Berlin. The adjutant requested Keitel, under the circumstances, to have Frevert transferred to the Luftwaffe-Reichsforstamt.

**Curt von Gottberg**. The personnel file presents a continuing tale of woe, success, and unconfirmed career details. Unlike most SS leaders letters of recommendation did not confirm his experience in the First World. As a Great War veteran he had apparently been on the 18th February 1914 a Lieutenant and promoted senior lieutenant on the 20th April 1919. His regiments included the 3rd Cuirassier, 1st Guard and the 2nd Fusilier Regiments. He was presented with the Iron Cross first and second-class. His extensive membership of the Ehrhardt Brigade (1920-24) went beyond its disbandment 1920. This was the principle formation in the Kapp Putsch and the brief occupation of Berlin that seriously threatened the government. It was also the first Freikorps formation to use the swastika.

**Heinrich Friedrich Wilhelm Hannibal**, born 19<sup>th</sup> November 1889, in Söllingen, near Helmstedt, in the area of Braunschweig, and lived in Hamburg. A Protestant, he was married in 1934 with two children. Studied at Volksschule and attended army non-commissioned officer school in April 1907. Served with distinction during the war, received the Iron Cross First and Second Class, attended officer school in 1915 and was finally established as Leutnant 15<sup>th</sup> July 1920. The next day became a member of the Hamburg Schutzpolizei from 16<sup>th</sup> July 1920 officially given the rank of Polizei-Oberwachtmeister. In January 1921, promoted to Leutnant of Schutzpolizei. Joined the Nazi Party on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1932 and the SA in January 1933. Between March and April 1938, during the Austrian Anschluß he commanded the II Motorised Detachment part of March Group III under Inspekteur der Ordnungspolizei für Steiermark. He was assigned to the 31<sup>st</sup> Polizei-schützen Regiment in 1938, in Hamburg, and remained with them until late in the war, whilst attending other assignments. On the 1 May 1939, he joined the SS as a Sturmbannführer. Took command of a Police Battalion 25 September 1940.

<sup>2</sup> BA ZNS, Wehrmacht officer file Walter Frevert.

Took command of a Police Regiment on the 21<sup>st</sup> April 1943 and promoted to Oberst der Schutzpolizei in May 1944. Received the Knights Cross in August 1944, recommended by Curt von Gottberg. Kampfgruppe Hannibal was subject to one of Hitler's last recorded military conferences. The unit was known to have surrendered in Königsberg in February 1945, by which time it had become Kampfgruppe Schubert. Hannibal's final circumstances are unknown.

**Georg Bruno Jedicke**, born 26<sup>th</sup> March 1887, in Dresden. Married in 1925 with one child. He passed his Arbitur (pre-University qualification). Joined the Kriegsmarine in 1906, becoming Kapitän-leutnant zur See, torpedo specialist. He was awarded the Iron Cross First and Second Class. Served with the Freikorps RWS from 1919 to 1921. In 1919 joined the Prussian Police, serving in the Preussen-Wasserschutzpolizei until 1931. He joined the Nazi Party in 1930 and the SS 20<sup>th</sup> April 1939. Rejoined the police as Oberstleutnant der polizei in 1935. In October 1941, he became Bdo Ostland in Riga. After Daluge he was the commander of the uniformed police officers in the east, including the Schutzmannschaft. The most senior uniformed police officer in attendance at the July 1942 meeting on Bandenbekämpfung. He was still in the east in March 1944 and in December was promoted to SS-Gruppenführer.

**Hans Jüttner**: was born the son of a schoolteacher on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1894, in Schmiegel in East Prussia (part of the Warthegau under the Nazis). His SS file provided evidence of an ancestral heritage that dated back to the 1780s. Jüttner had left gymnasium to become a bank-clerk, but in 1914 he volunteered for the 37<sup>th</sup> Fusilier Regiment. In 1917 he spent time as a transport officer in Turkey, Syria and Mesopotamia.<sup>3</sup> After the war he was involved in the Polish-German border battles. In 1920 he was promoted to senior lieutenant before leaving the army to run his own business.<sup>4</sup> Between 1920 and 1929 he still attended exercises with the Reichswehr (it is not known whether this was either through the reserves or the Black Reichswehr) and he was expected to become a fortress machine-gun detachment commander in the event of a crisis. In 1931, he joined the Nazi Party and the SA, becoming its senior training officer. During his time in the SA he achieved several awards for athletics and the honorary dagger. In 1935, he transferred to the SS and became a company commander of the newly formed SS-Standarte 'Deutschland', which later formed part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SS-Panzer Division 'Das Reich'. Jüttner participated in the raising of clandestine Freikorps-style forces that precipitated the Czechoslovakian crises of 1938-39. According to Robert Koehl, it was Jüttner's experience and expertise that was behind the formation of the SA defence units in the Sudetenland.<sup>5</sup> Later, on the orders of Hitler, he became the deputy to Himmler who was titular head of the Reserve Army on the 20<sup>th</sup> July 1944. This was probably a consolation for having been turned down for field command of the

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<sup>3</sup> Jüttner's military record appeared impressive. He was promoted to Lieutenant after one year, and after being shot in the thigh (which took five months to heal) he became a training officer. He remained in operations in Iraq until returned by ship to Wilhelmshaven in March 1919. Two months later he was involved in the fighting on the border after forming a motor transport pool in the area of Schneidemühl. In the early 1930s he was a company commander of a fortress battalion based in Breslau. When the war ended he had been awarded both the Iron Cross first and second-class as well as having received the Bronze wound badge.

<sup>4</sup> It was common practice for men to be promoted one rank prior to leaving the army.

<sup>5</sup> Koehl, 1983, p148.

12<sup>th</sup> SS Panzer Division earlier in 1944.<sup>6</sup>

**Ernst Korn**, born 11<sup>th</sup> June 1899, in Freiburg, im Breisgau, Baden-Württemberg, lived in Mannheim. His religion was Catholic, but he changed in line with SS membership. Served in the army in Jäger Battalion Nr. 8 from May 1917 to November 1918 as a Lieutenant. Joined the Reichswehr from May 1919 to June 1920. Then served for three months in the Oberschlesian Freikorps in 1921. Joined the Nazi Party on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 1933 and became a member of the SS 1<sup>st</sup> May 1939. Served in 213<sup>th</sup> Security Division for the last quarter of 1941. He then served as a battalion commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Polizeischützen Regiment from 16<sup>th</sup> December 1941 to 18<sup>th</sup> January 1942. For the next two months he served on the staff of the Waffen-SS commander in Holland. He was reputed to be an outstanding commander of troops. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> July, he became Chief of Staff of the HSSPF Russland-Mitte. Then on the 1<sup>st</sup> February 1943, he became Bach-Zelewski's chief of staff until 27<sup>th</sup> March 1943 when he became operations officer of KSRFSS. As a Nuremberg defence witness he was the only one to speak out against Bach-Zelewski.

**Friedrich-Wilhelm Krüger**, born on the 8<sup>th</sup> May 1894, in Strasbourg, in Alsace. Like his father, became a professional soldier in 1913. He was married with several children. Served throughout the war and joined the Freikorps "Lützow". Following the troubles he moved into business with the Müllabfahr A.G.Berlin (waste disposal) where he met Kurt Daluge. He joined the Nazi Party in 1929, the SS in 1930 and in 1932 became a member of the Reichstag. He worked for the SA following the Stennes Putsch up until the Röhm putsch. Between 1936 and 1939 worked with SS border police units, auxiliary SS formations and the raising of the SS cavalry formations in the role of their inspector. He became HSSPF Ost and controlled the police and security in the GG. He commanded the anti-partisan operations against the Kovpak Band in 1943. He later took command of the 5<sup>th</sup> SS Mountain Corps being replaced by Friedrich Jeckeln in 1945. In April he took command of the HSSPF East Prussia and formed the SS-Police units in the defence of Courland. He committed suicide in May 1945.

**Field Marshal Georg von Küchler**, came from a Prussian Junker family, born in May 1881 and commissioned into the army in 1901. He served on both fronts during the war and joined the Freikorps in the Baltic States. Under Hitler he rose in rank and in 1935 was made Inspector of the Army Schools. He spent all his inter-war years in the East Prussian military bureaucracy. His 18<sup>th</sup> Army had been central in the sweep through France and was invited to capture and march through Paris. The 18<sup>th</sup> Army took part in the invasion of Russia and, in January 1942, he took command of Army Group North. Küchler was relieved by Hitler following an argument over freedom of action in January 1944. He was captured and tried by the Americans at Nuremberg (sentenced to 20 years imprisonment and released in 1955).

**Waldemar Nowarre**, was born 24<sup>th</sup> August 1908, in Breslau, an evangelist. Nowarre attended Volksschule, Forstbildungsschule (forestry training school) and police training school (Polizei-berufsschule). He was married with two children. Nowarre eventually arose to become a captain but his career had taken several directions. On the 1<sup>st</sup> April 1930, he entered the Police School at Sensburg, and promoted on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 1931, to senior police officer (Polizei-wachtmeister) and sent to the 1<sup>st</sup> police department (Polizei

<sup>6</sup> NA, SS personnel file, the 1944 Lebenslauf for Hans Jüttner (n.d.).

Bereitschaft) in Breslau. He remained there until May 1935, whereupon he attended flying school in Cottbus for one month. During this time he was promoted to police staff officer (Polizeistabswachtmeister), in October 1934, and Oberwachtmeister, in April 1935. Following his brief period at flying school he attended the flying school for ground troops (Flugzeugschule) at Ludwigslust, and, then from 1938, assigned to the Ludwigslust Air Station security (Fliegerhorstkommandateur). During this time he was further promoted from Feldwebel to Oberfeldwebel and thence to Offiziers-Anwärter within the Luftwaffe.

**Heinz Reinefarth**, was born 26<sup>th</sup> December 1903, in Gnesen, Westpreussen. A Protestant who changed in line with SS membership. He joined the Nazi Party on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 1932 and the SS in December that year. His papers were the only ones in the extradition file of the US Intelligence agency. In an extraordinary situation the American officers made the comment that he had been released in June 1948 and was residing in the British zone. However their comments over his possible extradition to Poland were 'viewed unfavourably due to the intelligence interest involved.' In fact the Poles had requested Guderian, Rode, Reinefarth, Luttwitz and Vormann all of whom had become part of the Foreign Military Study programme. On this basis the US Army stated, 'it is suggested that you approach the appropriate British occupation authorities to advise them of this case and request their assistance to fore-stall the extradition of Heinz Reinefarth. The Department of state has been informed and concurs in this suggested action.'<sup>7</sup> On the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1948, the Americans now viewed it as a 'security risk' to extradite Reinefarth to Poland, 'or any Soviet dominated power.' He became a town mayor in Schleswig-Holstein after the war.

**Ernst Rode**, born 9<sup>th</sup> August 1894, in Wüstewaltersdorf, in Schlesian. A Protestant he was married on the 12<sup>th</sup> April 1930, they had three children. He was a member of the Freikorps for six months in 1919. In June 1920 he joined the Schutzpolizei. He joined the Nazi Party on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 1930. Chief of Staff of both the KSRFSS and the Chef der Bandenkampfverbände. Requested for extradition to Poland after the war.

**Bruno Streckenbach**, was born in 1902. He had been involved in the Freikorps, he was a member of the RSHA – Office I personnel, served in the Florian Geyer, and the 19th SS Division. Received the Knights Cross with Oak Leaves. Had led an Einsatzgruppe I in Poland. Was a merchant and had average schooling – he spoke English and French. Captured by the Russians he remained there until 1955. He avoided justice in 1973 because he was too ill to stand trial. An early SS and party member he died in 1977.

**Lothar von Trotha**, General of Infantry, born on the 3rd July 1848, in Magdeburg, studied at Gymnasium and the University of Berlin, and represents the link with the Franco-Prussian War, Imperial German militarism and the colonies. Between 1865 and 1871 von Trotha's career developed from officer cadet into a battalion adjutant with the 47<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. His primary military experience was with the old Prussian army and he was a veteran of the most important military victory in Europe between 1815 and 1914. His career development was unusual, normal periods of duty prior to advancement and promotion. Then on the 29th May 1894, he became the commander of the *Schutztruppe* in German South West Africa. He returned to Germany 3 years later

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<sup>7</sup> NARA RG319, IRR personnel file, memo 21st November 1947.

remaining there until 17<sup>th</sup> August 1900 until he joined the German military expedition to fight in the Boxer Rebellion, in China. He returned to become commander of the 16th Infantry Division in Trier. Then following serious reversal in the Herero uprising in German South West Africa he took command of the Schutztruppe on the 16<sup>th</sup> May 1904.<sup>8</sup> On the 21st May 1906, he was placed in reserve. In January 1910 he was honoured by being made General of Infantry. He died following a ten year retirement in Bonn in 1920.

**Karl Pfeffer-Wildenbruch**, was born in 1888, in East Prussia. He served in the First World War and joined the Schutzpolizei in 1919. He joined the Nazi party in 1932. He served in Chile as an advisor and later became chief of the colonial police where he introduced military training programmes.

**Alfred Wünnenberg**, born in 1891, in Saarburg, in the Lorraine region. Alfred Wünnenberg took over the Ordnungspolizei in 1943 following Daluge's retirement.

**Members of the Schenckendorff Course 24-26<sup>th</sup> September 1941, by senior officer and then subordinates:**

Army Group Mitte representatives: Ib Major Gericke (quartermaster); and Major Graf von Hardenberg.

Oberkommando des Heeres: Hauptmann Foerster.

Staff officers of the Army Group Mitte rear-area:

Chief of Staff: Oberstleutnant Rübesamen; Ia: Major von Kraewel; Quartermaster: Major Dr. Hoffmann; Ic: Oberleutnant Stürmer; Ic/A.O.: Ritmeister Dr. Kießler; Ic./Prop Sonderführer Dr. Hauke; GFP: GFP Director Hartl; VII: K.V.Abtg. Chef Tesmer; III: Ob.Kr.Ger.Rat Von Büнау; O.1.: Oberleutnant Dr. Langen and H.Qu.: Leutnant Müller.

221st Security Division: III Battalion/350<sup>th</sup> Jäger Regiment Hauptmann Balitzki; 4<sup>th</sup> Company/352<sup>nd</sup> Landesbattalion Hauptmann Fisher and Leutnant Macholz of 350<sup>th</sup> Jäger Regiment.

286<sup>th</sup> Security Division: Oberstleutnant von Rekowski (commander) 354<sup>th</sup> Jäger Regiment; 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion/Jäger Regiment Major Waldow (commander); 2<sup>nd</sup> Company/354<sup>th</sup> Jäger Regiment Hauptmann Schätze (commander)

403<sup>rd</sup> Security Division: III Battalion/406<sup>th</sup> Jäger Regiment Hauptmann Tiesler; Chef 8<sup>th</sup> Company/406<sup>th</sup> Jäger Regiment Oberleutnant Klenner; O.3 Leutnant Lortz; 9<sup>th</sup> Company/693<sup>rd</sup> Oberleutnant Geigengack (commander); 6<sup>th</sup> Company/693<sup>rd</sup> Jäger Regiment Leutnant Kiessler.

339<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division: Ia Oberleutnant Sild; I Battalion/693<sup>rd</sup> Oberstleutnant Tillessen and a company commander undecided at that point. 693<sup>rd</sup> Jäger Regiment Oberst Vüllers and Ic Hauptmann Knell.

HSSPF Mitte: Von dem Bach (Bach-Zelewski); Ia Major Cranz (Ordnungspolizei); Nachrichtenoffiziere, Hauptmann Schulz (Ordnungspolizei).

Chefs der Sicherheitspolizei und Sicherheitsdienst: General Nebe

SS-Cavalry Brigade: SS-Standartenführer Fegelein (Commander); 1 SS-Cavalry Regiment – SS-Sturmabführer Lombard; Squadron Commander SS-Hauptsturmführer Fritsche.

2nd Security Regt: Oberst Ronicke (Commander); I Battalion Commander –

<sup>8</sup> MSg 109 10872

Hauptmann Göbel; Company commander Leutnant Müller.

Polizei Regiment Mitte: Oberstleutnant Montua (commander); 307<sup>th</sup> Police Battalion Major Stahr (commander) and from 316<sup>th</sup> Police Battalion Hauptmann Nord.

690<sup>th</sup> Feldgendarmerie Detachment: Hauptmann Lindenberg (commander); 3<sup>rd</sup> Company/690<sup>th</sup> GFP Hauptmann Horn; 1st Company/690<sup>th</sup> GFP Hauptmann Wendt; 2<sup>nd</sup> Company/690<sup>th</sup> GFP Leutnant Schadt (platoon commander).

Feldkommandanturen 191: Oberstleutnant von Jagwitz (kommandant); OK I/284 Major Fröhlich.

Feldkommandanturen 581: Major b. Stabe Major Pape.

Wi. In. Mitte: Lagers-Kommandant Oberstleutnant Zipperling; Verb. Offz. Oberstleutnant Kling.

339<sup>th</sup> Pioneer Battalion: unknown.



## Appendix 4: Maps

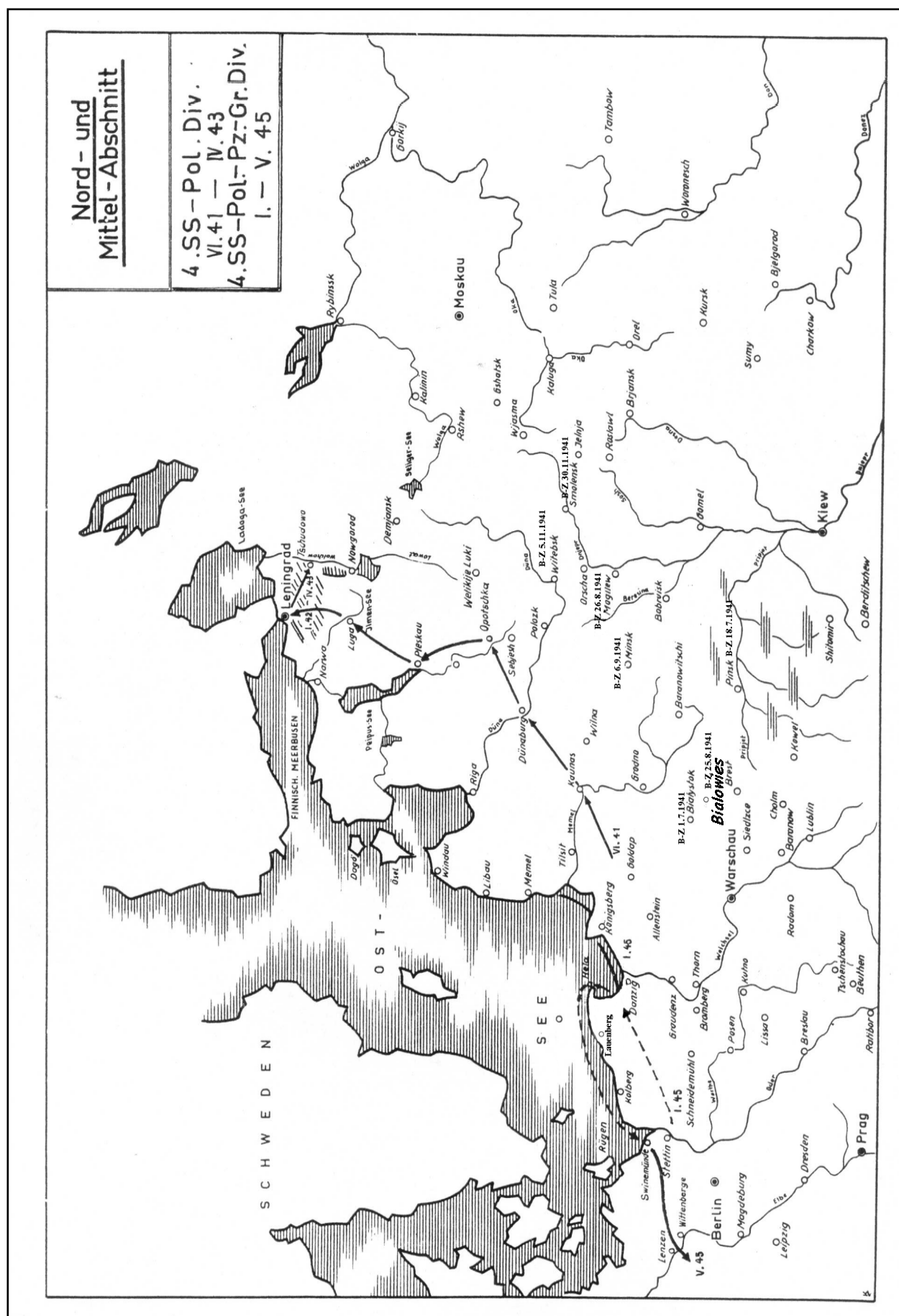
### Map explanations:

1. This first map illustrates the position of the Soviet partisan dispositions in Summer 1943. It was taken from J.J. Baritz, 'The Phantom War: Occupied Russia 1941/1943', Purnell's History of the Second World War, volume 49, (BPC, 1972).
2. The second and third maps come from Deutsches Rotes Kreuz, Suchdienst, *Divisionsschicksale*, Band II, München 1958-1960. The first covers the area of Northern Soviet Russia and includes Bialowies (in German) and includes the major included in Bach-Zelewski's itinerary of 1941. The map was originally intended to help track the route of the SS 'Polizei' Division. The second map covers the routes of the 5<sup>th</sup> SS Panzer Division 'Wiking', which eventually came to support the JSKB, referred to in chapter nine.

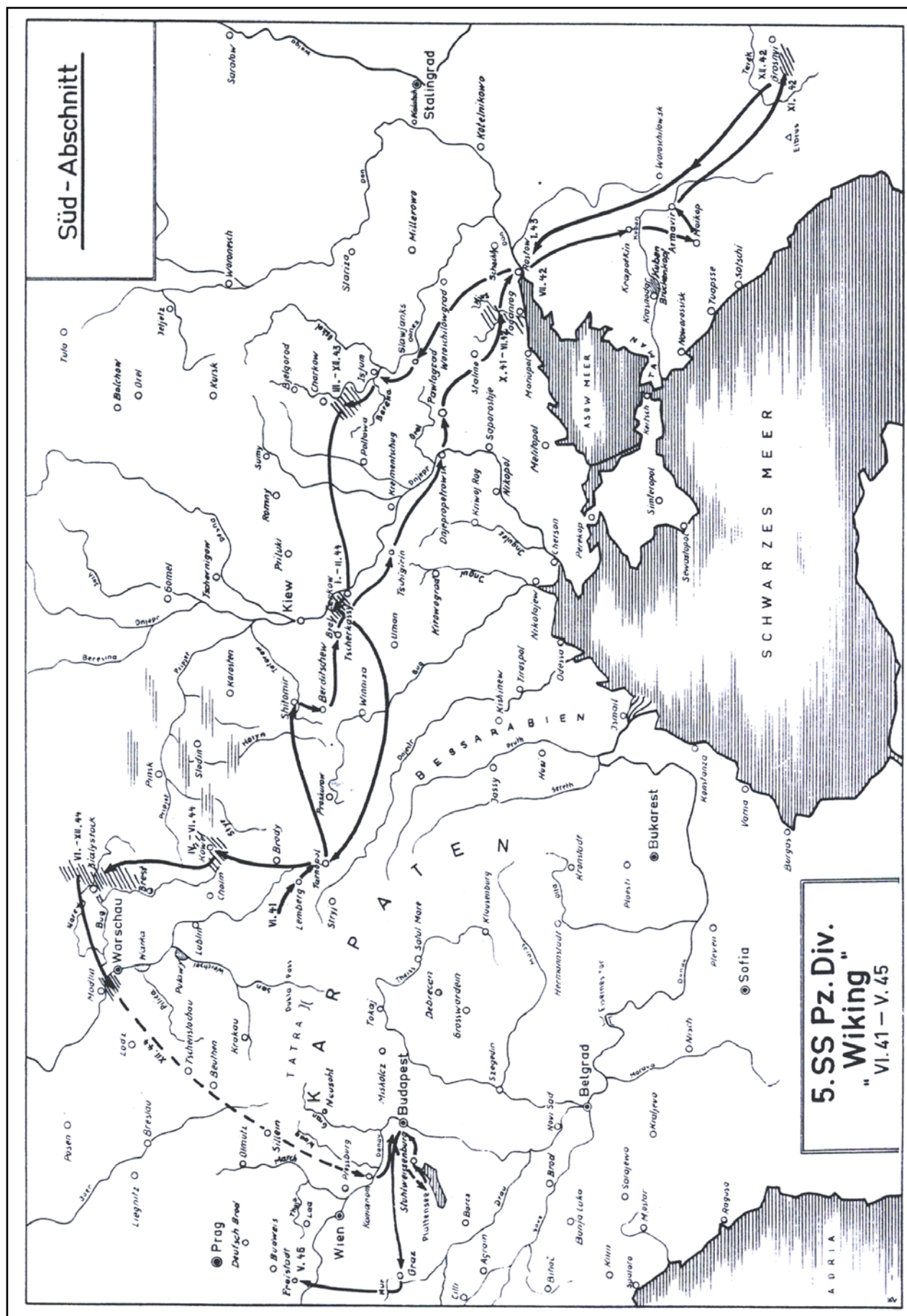
Map 1: Soviet partisan deployment July 1943



### Map 2: Northern Soviet Russia, Bialowies and Bach-Zelewski's movements of 1941

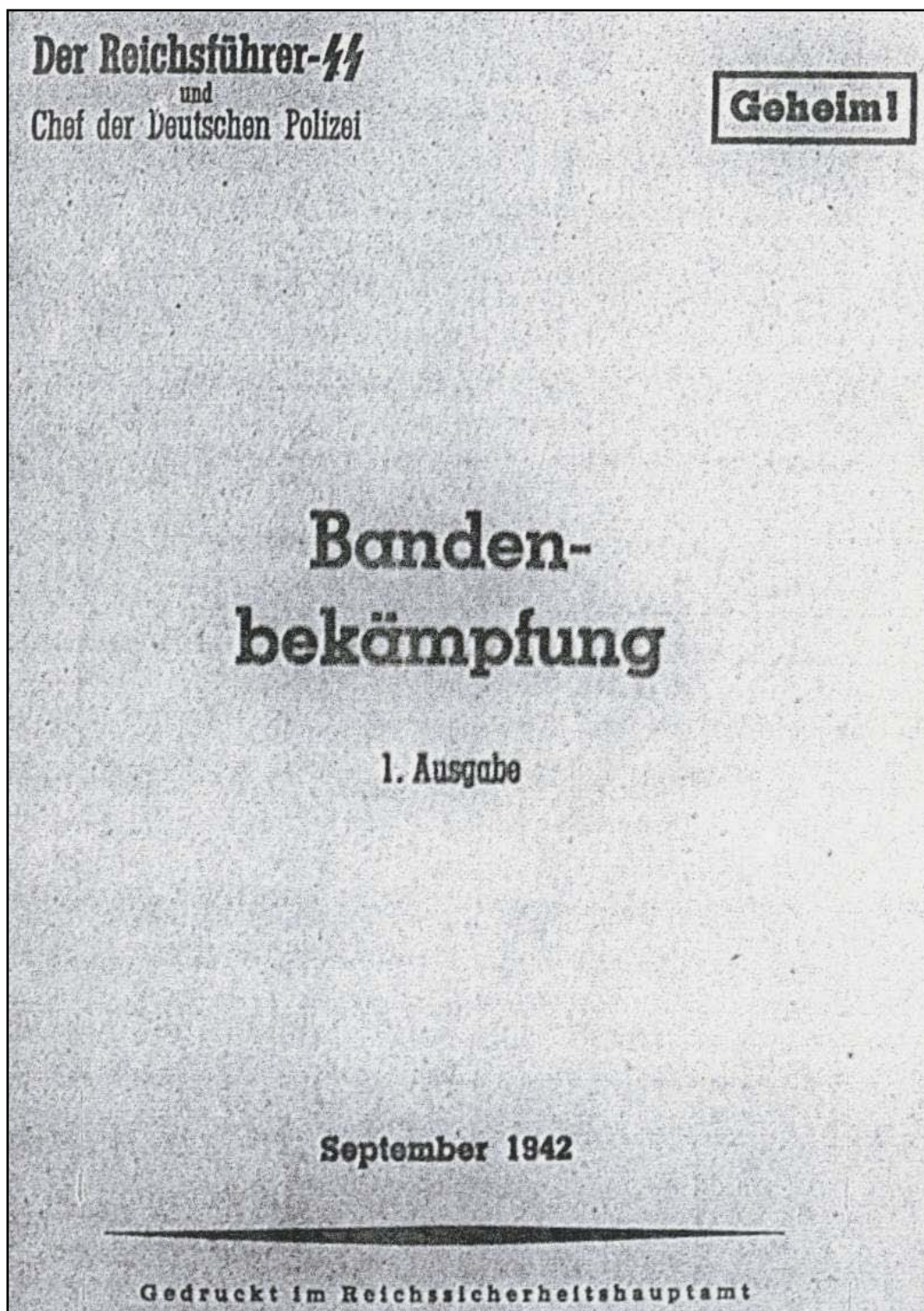


### Map 3: Southern area of German occupied Soviet Union





## Appendix 5: Bandenbekämpfung Manual 1942





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## Vorwort.

Der Bolschewismus hat es zuwege gebracht, neben den sonst in modernen Armeen bekannten Waffengattungen als neue die der sogenannten Partisanen ins Leben zu rufen.

Er verfolgt damit die gleiche Taktik, die er als Komintern von 1917 bis 1939 beibehielt, neben die legalen, auch illegale Parteiorganisationen zu stellen. Mit dem Begriff „Partisan“ versucht der Bolschewismus, der Bandentätigkeit eine nationale Untermauerung zu geben, den Banditen aus dem Hinterhalt zum Freiheitskämpfer, Patrioten zu stempeln.

Wir alle haben bis jetzt den von bolschewistisch-jüdischen Untermenschen neu geprägten Begriff übernommen und damit mitgeholfen, daß die für uns gefährliche Einheit von sogenannten Partisanen in der Bevölkerung gewahrt blieb.

Die Partisanen sind in Zukunft als das zu bezeichnen, was sie tatsächlich sind: als Banditen, die als Heckenschützen, Frantireure und Straßenräuber ihre hinterhältigen Schüsse abgeben und ihre Sabotageakte verüben, um dann zu fliehen und die Verantwortung für ihre Taten den sehr oft unschuldigen Einwohnern des Landes aufzubürden.

## I. Grundsätzliche Anweisungen Stalin's zum Partisanenkrieg.

### a) Aus der Rundfunkrede vom 3. 7. 1941:

„In dem vom Feind besetzten Gebiet müssen Partisanenabteilungen gebildet werden, beritten und zu Fuß; Diversionsgruppen müssen entstehen zum Kampf gegen die Abteilungen der feindlichen Armee zwecks Entfaltung des Partisanenkrieges überall, um Brücken zu sprengen, Wege zu beschädigen, Telefon- und Telegrafverbindungen zu zerstören, Wälder, Lager in Brand zu setzen und den Nachschub zu vernichten. In den besetzten Gebieten müssen unerträgliche Lebensbedingungen für den Feind geschaffen, seine Helfershelfer verfolgt, auf Schritt und Tritt vernichtet und seine Maßnahmen vereitelt werden.“

### b) Aus der Rede vom 6. 11. 1941 anlässlich der Feier des XXIV. Jahrestages der Oktoberrevolution:

„Die deutschen Eindringlinge wollen einen Vernichtungskrieg mit den Völkern der UdSSR haben. Es sei denn, wenn die Deutschen einen Vernichtungskrieg haben wollen, so werden sie ihn bekommen.

Von nun an wird unsere Aufgabe, die Aufgabe der Völker der UdSSR, die Aufgabe der Soldaten, Kommandeure und

politischen Mitarbeiter, unserer Armee und unserer Flotte darin bestehen, alle Deutschen, die sich auf das Territorium unseres Vaterlandes in der Eigenschaft als Okkupanten eingeschlichen haben, bis zum letzten Mann zu vernichten.

Keine Schonung der deutschen Okkupanten!“

### c) Aus der Rede vom 7. 11. 1941 bei der Parade der Roten Armee in Moskau:

„Genossen, Rotarmisten und Matrosen der Roten Flotte, Kommandeure und politische Mitarbeiter, Partisanen und Partisaninnen! Eingedenk all dessen, sei ein mutiger und standhafter Soldat. Die Liebe zum sowjetischen Vaterland und der Haß gegenüber dem Feind — sind Deine stärksten Waffen. Die Todesverachtung — Deine Pflicht. Ein Feigling stirbt hundertmal — aber ein Held stirbt nur einmal. Die Erinnerung an ihn ist im Volk unsterblich.

Aber Deine Pflicht besteht nicht nur darin, mit Würde und Ehre selbst gegen den Feind zu kämpfen, sondern auch darin, alle Werktätigen mit sich in den Kampf gegen die hitleristischen Fanatiker zu führen.

Du bist nicht nur Soldat, sondern auch Propagandist, Agitator der Partei und des Volkes. Schmiede alle Kräfte des Volkes für den Vernichtungskrieg gegen die deutschen Okkupanten zusammen!

Ziehe neue Genossen — Arbeiter, Bauern und Intelligenz, mutige, ehrliche und der Sowjetregierung ergebene, in die Partisanenabteilungen und Diversionsgruppen hinein!“



## II. Der Bandenschwur.

(Aus der Broschüre „Sowjetpartisanen“, erschienen 1941 im Verlag „Junge Garde“, Moskau.)

„Ich, der Bürger des großen Sowjetverbandes, ein treuer Sohn des heldenhaften russischen Volkes, schwöre, daß ich die Waffe solange nicht aus der Hand legen werde, bis die alte faschistische Schlange auf unserer russischen Erde vernichtet sein wird.

Ich verpflichte mich bedingungslos, die Befehle meiner Kommandeure und Vorgesetzten auszuführen und mit militärischer Strenge die Disziplin zu halten. Für die niedergebrannten Städte und Dörfer, für den Tod unserer Kinder, für die Folterungen, die Gewalttaten und die Verhöhnung meines Volkes schwöre ich, mich an dem Feind grausam, schonungslos und unermüdlich zu rächen. Blut um Blut! Tod um Tod!

Ich schwöre, daß ich mit allen Mitteln der Roten Armee helfen will, die wütenden Hitlerhunde zu vernichten und dabei weder Blut, noch mein Leben schonen werde.

Ich schwöre, daß ich eher im grausamen Kampf sterben, als mich und meine Familie und das ganze russische Volk der Knechtschaft des hinterlistigen Faschismus ausliefern will.

Falls ich aus Angst, Schwachheit oder böswillig diesen Schwur verletzen und die Interessen des Volkes verraten sollte, so will ich durch die Hand meiner eigenen Kameraden einen schmachvollen Tod sterben!“

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Die wichtigste Erkenntnis ist: das Gesetz des Handelns muß ganz klar bei uns liegen. Wir müssen die Banden jagen und beschäftigen, nicht die Banden uns. Sogenannte passive Abwehr durch reinen Objektschutz bedeutet die Beherrschung eines Gebietes durch die Banden.

Das Ziel ist stets, die Initiative an uns zu reißen, die Banden in die Verteidigung zu drängen, Banditen und Franktireure von der Bevölkerung zu trennen, ihnen die Versorgung aus dem Land zu nehmen, ihre Handlungsfreiheit trotz der Weite des Raumes zu beschränken, sie allmählich einzukreisen, die Banden zu zerschlagen und die einzelnen Trupps zu Fuß, zu Pferd, auf Skiern solange zu jagen, bis auch der Letzte ausgerottet ist.

### 1. Arten der Banden im weiteren Sinne.

Es ist zu unterscheiden zwischen

den **militärischen Formationen**, die — mehr oder minder noch intakt — sich aus abgesprengten Truppenteilen der Roten Armee zusammensetzen, unter einheitlicher militärischer und politischer Führung stehen, mit leichten bis schweren Waffen, mit Kurier- und Funkverbindung versehen und schließlich auch nach einheitlichen Richtlinien planmäßig gesteuert und tätig sind,

den **Banden**, also jenen Häufen, die mit Mord, Raub, Plünderung usw., nach Art von Räuberbanden, ihr Leben fristen, wobei ihnen Gesichtspunkte des Partisanenkampfes vorschweben, die sich mit Resten von militärischen Formationen vereinigen, mit der bolschewistischen militärischen Leitung durch Funkapparate in Verbindung sind, zum Teil durch Flugzeuge versorgt werden und in vielen Fällen Nachschub und Verstärkung durch abgesprungene Fallschirmagenten bekommen,

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## III. Grundsätzliche Betrachtungen zu den Methoden der Bekämpfung der Banden.

(Auf den Erlaß des RSHA vom 14.2.1942 Amt IV Nr. 925/B/41 g betr. die Erfahrungen über die Arbeitsweise der Banden und ihre Bekämpfung wird Bezug genommen.)

Eine der wesentlichsten Stärken der bolschewistischen Banden ist ihre triebhaft gewandte Anpassung an die örtlichen, sachlichen, personellen und zeitlichen Gegebenheiten, ihre Findigkeit, Tarnung und Improvisation bei ihrem Vorgehen.

Diesem geschickten, blitzartigen, sehr oft auf Täuschung abzielendem und nicht zuletzt brutalem und kompromislosem Vorgehen etwa mit althergebrachten, erlernten, sturen und schwerfälligen Abwehrformen begegnen zu wollen, hieße, das Wesen dieser Bandentätigkeit zu verkennen.

Wenn im Nachstehenden der Versuch unternommen wird, einige der wesentlichsten Erfahrungsgrundsätze, die sich in der letzten Zeit herausgeschält haben, zur Bekämpfung dieser Banditen aufzuzeigen, so geschieht dies in der Voraussetzung, daß diese Grundsätze nach den jeweils vorhandenen verschiedenen Gegebenheiten gewandelt, geändert, aber auch vervollständigt werden, insgesamt also anregend wirken.

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den **Einzelbanditen**, also jenen Einzelgängern, die sich zur Erleichterung ihres Fortkommens zufällig zusammengeschlossen haben und um ihr nacktes Leben kämpfen.

Diese Unterscheidung mag zunächst theoretisch anmuten; sie ist aber erforderlich, um endlich einmal das Bandenwesen schlechthin, wie es zudem oftmals jahrhundertlang landesüblich war, von den militärischen Formationen zu trennen, damit auf diese Weise eine der ersten Voraussetzungen für eine nachhaltige Bekämpfung geschaffen werden kann, nämlich der **Gesamtüberblick**.

### 2. Die nachrichtendienstliche Erfassung.

Erste Voraussetzung einer erfolgreichen Bekämpfung sowohl der Banden als auch der Einzelbanditen ist deren **nachrichtendienstliche Erfassung und Einkreisung**.

Es wird nicht verkannt, daß die Schwierigkeiten sehr groß sind; sie zu beseitigen und zu überwinden ist die vornehmste Aufgabe der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD.

Die Ergebnisse nachrichtendienstlicher Erfassung (Stärke, Bewaffnung, Führung, Quartiere, Ausweichquartiere, Absichten, Gewohnheiten, Nachrichtenverbindungen, Funkstationen, — zumeist von der Bande getarnt — usw.) schaffen überhaupt erst eine Voraussetzung zweckentsprechenden und erfolgreichen Einsatzes. Ohne sie sind die Erfolge durch Zufälle bedingt, noch dazu meist mit schwersten Opfern erkauft. Denn:

Die **Beweglichkeit der Banden**, die zudem den großen Vorteil für sich buchen können, mit den örtlichen Verhältnissen und mit den unter Druck gehaltenen Bevölkerungskreisen vertraut zu sein, ist meist die Ursache für das Mißlingen der nach militärischen Grundsätzen aufgebauten Vernichtungsaktionen.

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Eines der Mittel, diesen grundsätzlichen Nachteil zu überwinden, ist die nachrichtendienstliche Erfassung, die wiederum nur dann zum Erfolg führen kann, wenn sie in der Hand von erfahrenen Angehörigen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD liegt.

Die Grundlage einer nachrichtendienstlichen Erfassung des Bandenwesens ist ein Nachrichtennetz, das Bürgermeister, Dorfälteste und Dorfbewohner usw. umfaßt und das über Meldeköpfe, von den Sicherungsposten der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD betreut, aufgebaut, geleitet und gesteuert wird.

Möglichst unabhängig von diesem allgemeinen Nachrichtennetz ist die Schaffung eines Kundschafterdienstes erforderlich, der sich insbesondere in den Gebieten zu konzentrieren hat, in denen Banden aufgetaucht sind.

Als Kundschafter werden zweckmäßig verwandt

- a) ehemalige Rotarmisten, Bandenangehörige,
- b) zuverlässige Landbewohner, vor allem Mädchen,
- c) Frauen, aber auch
- d) Greise und Kinder.

Nur ein Masseneinsatz von Kundschaftern führt zu Erfolgen.

Als Ausgangsbasis dienen die Meldungen aus dem allgemeinen Nachrichtennetz, die Angaben festgenommener Bandenmitglieder oder die Schilderungen der Bewohner der gefährdeten Gebiete.

Deshalb dürfen auch Bandenmitglieder erst dann erschossen werden, wenn sie eingehend vernommen worden sind und ihr oftmals reiches Wissen und ihre reichen Erfahrungen preisgegeben haben. Dabei muß stets geprüft werden, ob sich der Einzelne nicht als Kundschafter verwenden läßt.

Daß die Vernehmung, wenn erforderlich, mit den brutalsten Mitteln durchgeführt werden muß, versteht sich von selbst.

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Bei der Anlage des Nachrichten- und Kundschafternetzes muß beachtet werden, daß sich auch die Banden vielfach ein solches geschaffen haben. Es muß daher sorgfältigst vorgegangen werden; die Zusammenarbeit mit den Nachrichtenspersonen und Kundschaftern muß bestmöglichst getarnt werden.

Es ist zweckmäßig, das Kundschafternetz, die Meldewege und Meldeköpfe nach jeder abgeschlossenen Aktion auszuwechseln.

### 3. Präventivmaßnahmen.

Neben dem Aufbau eines engen Nachrichten- und Kundschafternetzes sind bestimmte Präventivmaßnahmen ebenfalls geeignet, die Tätigkeit der Banden einzuschränken.

So z. B.:

#### a) Meldepflicht für Ortsfremde;

Die Bürgermeister, die Dorfältesten, die Hausbewohner usw. werden bei Androhung der Auspeitschung und der Erschießung verpflichtet, jeden Ortsfremden sofort zu melden.

Zweckmäßig ist die Einführung von Hauslisten, die alle Hausbewohner namentlich anführen, vom Bürgermeister bestätigt und an der Innenseite der Haustüre angeschlagen werden.

Jede Aenderung muß sofort bescheinigt werden.

Die Einhaltung dieser Auflage ist stichprobenweise nachzuprüfen. Sehr vorteilhaft hat sich das Durchkämmen größerer Gebiete nach Ortsfremden erwiesen.

Weiter ist mit allen Mitteln das ziel- und planlose Umherwandern zu unterbinden.

Diese Wanderbewegung ist systematisch vor allem in den größeren Städten abzufangen, die Wanderer in ein Arbeitslager einzuweisen.

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Es ist zu beachten:

**Milde Behandlung**, mit welcher der Bandit, der den Tod erwartet, durch geradezu kavalliermäßige Behandlung überrascht wird, Zigaretten, Schnaps, gut zu essen usw.

Der Tod allein bedeutet dem Slaven in seiner Sturheit nichts; er rechnet von vornherein mit ihm. Hingegen fürchtet er Schläge; er fürchtet aber auch Vergeltungsmaßnahmen gegen seine Sippe. Diese Möglichkeiten sind aber auch konsequent zu erschöpfen.

Die an die Kundschafter gegebenen Aufträge müssen dem Intelligenzgrade des Einzelnen angepaßt werden, wie überhaupt die Aufträge so einfach wie möglich gefaßt sein müssen.

Als Gegenleistung wird dem Kundschafter gute Verpflegung (Geld hat für ihn keinen Wert), vor allem aber die Sicherheit seiner Familie, gewährleistet. Diese Sicherung der Familie muß aber tatsächlich durchgeführt werden und muß zwecks propagandistischer Auswertung möglichst augenscheinlich sein.

Die Familien unserer Vertrauensleute sind, um ihr Leben zu sichern, häufig in völlig andere Gegenden zu versetzen.

Der Meldeweg der Kundschafter soll möglichst kurz sein (Einrichtung von Meldeköpfen); der Kundschafter soll mit einem Ausweis versehen sein (möglichst knitterfreies Papier zum Einnähen).

Als sehr zweckmäßig hat sich erwiesen, Kundschafter paarweise einzusetzen.

Ist eine Bande ausgemacht, muß der Kundschafter mit ihr bis zum Einsatz der Aktion Verbindung halten.

Es ist erfolgreicher, die Bande länger zu beobachten, als zu früh den Einsatz anzusetzen. Weisungsgemäß wechseln die Banden sehr häufig und schnell ihre Standorte, insbesondere nach Ueberfällen, Plünderungen usw.

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#### b) Meldesystem.

Zwischen den einzelnen Ortschaften ist ein Meldesystem (Alarmfeuer, Tonsignal, Winkzeichen, Meldeläufer usw.) zu vereinbaren, das sofort beim Auftauchen von Banden ausgelöst wird (Sonderzeichen ausmachen, damit ein solches System nicht zum Hinterhalt dienen kann).

#### c) Schaffung von stärkeren Stützpunkten.

Wichtig, insbesondere auch im Hinblick auf die Auswirkungen auf die Bevölkerung, ist die Schaffung stärkerer Stützpunkte (z. B. in unmittelbarer Nähe von Lebensmittel-, Verkehrsstellen, Wasserstellen usw.) unter Heranziehung der wehrfähigen Bevölkerung.

Für die Verbindungsmöglichkeiten dieser Stützpunkte unter sich gilt das oben Gesagte.

#### d) Nachrichtendienst entlang den Verkehrswegen.

Besonders intensiv ist die nachrichtendienstliche Bearbeitung der Gebietsteile entlang den Verkehrswegen (Straßen, Eisenbahnen, Kanäle usw.) zu konzentrieren.

Vor allem ist unter dem einheimischen Streckenpersonal ein enges Nachrichtennetz eine geradezu lebensnotwendige Voraussetzung.

#### e) Beseitigung von Hinterhalten.

Bauwerke, Hütten usw., welche Unterschlupf gewähren können, sind bei den gelegentlichen Streifzügen durch das Gelände zu vernichten.

Straßen, Eisenbahnstrecken, Schifffahrtskanäle usw. sind unter Heranziehung der Bevölkerung auf 300 m Breite zu lichten und vom Unterholz total zu befreien.

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Ein völliges Abholzen würde in vielen Fällen ein rasches Emporschießen des früheren Unterholzes zur Folge haben.

Das geschlagene Holz kann der Bevölkerung zum raschen Abtransport unentgeltlich zur Verfügung gestellt werden.

Befinden sich zudem in der näheren Umgebung von Verkehrsstrecken Wälder, Hügel usw., die als Hinterhalt geeignet sind, ist — wenn die örtlichen Verhältnisse es für zweckdienlich erscheinen lassen — durch Einrammen von Einzelstämmen entlang der Verkehrsstrecke eine wenigstens notdürftige Deckungsmöglichkeit für etwa Ueberfallene zu schaffen.

Straßengräben und Erdhaufen, die sehr oft von MG-Schützen als Deckung benützt werden, sind einzuschütten, bzw. abzutragen.

Sind Verkehrsstrecken der Schauplatz wiederholter Ueberfälle, empfiehlt es sich, Streckenlotsen aufzustellen, welche die gefährlichen Abschnitte genau kennen, sodaß der Ueberfall auf alarmbereite Kolonnen stößt.

Solche Strecken sind auch des Oefteren mit gut getarnten, möglichst (wenn auch provisorisch) gepanzerten Fahrzeugen zu befahren. Die Insassen müssen als Stoß- und Vernichtungstrupps besonders geschult sein.

Auch der Einsatz falscher Banden bewährt sich, um mit echten in Verbindung zu kommen und die innere Haltung bestimmter Bevölkerungskreise kennen zu lernen, insbesondere aber, um in den Kundschafterdienst echter Banden einzudringen.

#### 4. Die Bekämpfung.

Die Bekämpfung der Banden ist grundsätzlich Angelegenheit der Waffen- und Ordnungspolizei bzw. der Wehrmacht.

Die Sicherheitspolizei und der SD stehen aufgrund der nachrichtendienstlichen Erkenntnisse den zum Einsatz bestimmten Formationen beratend zur Seite.

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- b) Bestimmung einer Sicherungszone (Aufnahme der Evakuierten, der Tiere, der Lager usw.),
- c) Anlage von stärkeren Stützpunkten,
- d) Umstellung des Gesamtgebietes durch Kräfte älterer Jahrgänge bzw. Schutzmannschaften,
- e) Einsatz von Stoßtrupps,
- f) propagandistische Beeinflussung der Bevölkerung, um deren Mitarbeit zu intensivieren.

#### 5. Gegenbanden.

In zahlreichen Fällen hat sich die Aufstellung von Gegenbanden bestens bewährt.

Gegenbanden werden zweckmäßig gebildet aus Kräften der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD und der Ordnungspolizei. Dazu kommen Einheimische, deren Zuverlässigkeit bereits erprobt ist.

Sie ziehen nach Art der echten Banden in den verseuchten Gegenden umher, haben mit einem Sendegerät dauernd Verbindung mit starken Einsatzkräften, prüfen das Verhalten der Bevölkerung, suchen Verbindung mit echten Banden und erledigen deren Mitglieder möglichst einzeln und unauffällig.

Daneben wird u. a. erreicht, daß sich die Einzelbanden mißtrauisch gegenüberstehen.

#### 6. Befriedete Gebiete.

Sind Gebiete befriedet, so muß durch Aufstellen von Schutzmannschaften, Ortswehren, Einsatz von Bürgermeistern mit persönlicher Verantwortung, Anlage von stärkeren Stützpunkten (Gendarmerie, Schutzmannschafts-Station usw.) mög-

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Hierzu nehmen die Führer der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD mit den Führern der in ihrem Bereich eingesetzten Formationen von sich aus persönlich Verbindung auf, um sie möglichst auch im Kampfgebiet vom Ergebnis der Aufklärung zu unterrichten. Diese persönliche Führungnahme muß der Klarheit und der Zeitersparnis dienen, damit die Kampftruppe taktisch richtig und schnell genug unter Ausnützung des Ueberraschungsmoments eingesetzt werden kann. Bei der Uebermittlung der nachrichtendienstlichen Erkenntnisse ist scharf zu unterscheiden zwischen den tatsächlichen eigenen Wahrnehmungen, den Berichten Dritter (der Kundschafter, N-Leute usw.) und der darauf fußenden eigenen Vermutung. Es ist stets zu bedenken, daß oberflächliche oder verspätete Weitergabe der eingegangenen Nachrichten den Erfolg des Einsatzes in Frage stellt und deutsches Blut kostet.

Ziel ist die Vernichtung der Banditen, nicht deren Vertreibung. Darüber müssen die nachrichtendienstlichen Erkenntnisse mit der taktischen Anlage der Aktion zusammenklingen.

Voraussetzung ist, daß der Zugriff schnell, überraschend, umfassend und beweglich erfolgt.

Der Hauptstoß ist auf das Führerlager der Bande zu richten. Einmal der Führung beraubt, ist die Bande zumindest gesprengt.

Dazu gehören besonders ausgebildete Stoßtrupps, die mit allen zweckentsprechenden Waffen ausgerüstet sind.

Falls örtliche Umstände es erforderlich machen, ist anzuregen

- a) die Errichtung eines Sperrgürtels (Evakuierung aller wehrfähigen Männer, Abtrieb des Viehes, Sicherung der Lebensmittel- und besonders Getreidelager usw.),

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lichst sichergestellt werden, daß diese Gebiete nicht mehr beunruhigt werden können. Wichtig ist, daß die Bevölkerung wieder das Gefühl der Sicherheit gewinnt.

#### 7. Vergeltungsmaßnahmen.

Vergeltungsmaßnahmen für unaufgeklärte Ueberfälle, Gewalttaten usw. rechtfertigen sich nur in den Fällen, in denen ein subjektives Zusammenwirken der Bevölkerung mit den Banden festgestellt ist.

Handelt es sich um ein seitens der Banditen erzwungenes Zusammenwirken (z. B. durch Herausgabe von Verpflegung), trifft die Vergeltungsmaßnahme nur die Bande.

Erfahrungsgemäß flüchtet die Bevölkerung vor den Vergeltungsmaßnahmen in die Wälder und wird dort eine Beute der Banden, die damit ihre Bestände an wehrfähigen Männern ergänzen können.

Wenn Vergeltungsmaßnahmen durchgeführt werden müssen, dann muß aber auch die Bevölkerung aufgeklärt werden, warum die Maßnahmen getroffen worden sind.

Diese Aufklärung kann nicht wichtig genug angesehen werden.

#### 8. Propagandistische Aufklärung der Bevölkerung.

Der Bevölkerung ist in Flugblättern zu sagen: Moskauer nennt die Banditen „Partisanen“ und „Helden“. In Wirklichkeit sind sie die größten Feiglinge. Sie sind tapfer auf Kosten der armen verschüchterten Bevölkerung, die sie überall auspressen, ihr die Lebensmittel wegnehmen und vor allem, indem sie die Unschuldigen in die größte Lebensgefahr bringen. Es entspricht den Moskauer Anweisungen für diese

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Banditen, aus einem Dorf oder Haus auf die deutschen Truppen zu schießen und dann im Schutz der Dunkelheit zu entkommen und die arme Einwohnerschaft dem Gericht, das die Truppe mit Recht über ein solches Dorf abhält, zu überlassen.

Diese und ähnliche Gedankengänge sind in Veröffentlichungen, Straßenanschlagen, Flugblättern, zu verwenden, in denen nun die Bevölkerung zur Meldung jedes Ortsfremden, zur Dingfestmachung aller Ortsfremden und zur Uebergabe dieser Leute an die deutschen Behörden aufgefordert wird.

(Nachsatz: Diese Richtlinien werden nach den praktischen Erfahrungen und Erkenntnissen laufend ergänzt bzw. erweitert.)

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Dienstverrichtung in den Garnisonen, die Bewachungsordnung und andere verschiedene Gewohnheiten.

Eine der besonders wichtigen Arten des Partisanenkampfes ist der Hinterhalt. Kleine Gruppen von „Partisanen“, etwa 6 bis 8 Mann, lauern den Feind im Gebüsch, im an die Straße angrenzenden Wald, in mit Gestrüpp bewachsenen Gräben auf. Tarnen Sie sich gut, damit der Feind von Ihrer Anwesenheit ja nichts bemerkt. Wähle als Hinterhalt so einen Platz, von wo aus ein breiter Beschuß der Straße erfolgen kann.

Siehe da! Der Feind zeigt sich. Laß ihn auf eine nahe Entfernung, 10 bis 20 m, herankommen und eröffne plötzlich einen Feuerüberfall aus Maschinengewehren, Gewehren und Handgranaten. Es ist wichtig, dies derart schnell und unerwartet durchzuführen, um dem Feind keine Zeit zu lassen, von seinen Feuerwaffen Gebrauch zu machen. Nach der hervorgerufenen Überraschung schreite, falls nötig, zum Handgemenge. Stich mit dem Seitengewehr, schlage mit dem Spaten, mit dem Kolben, stich mit dem Messer zu. Ueberlasse dem Feinde nicht die Initiative der Handlungen.

In so einem Kampf sind Panzerabwehrgranaten von großem Nutzen. Man kann sie gut in eine sich in Bewegung befindliche Kolonne, Kraftfahrzeug, Kavalleriestreife usw. werfen.

Hinterhalt auf Straßen ist hauptsächlich am Tage zu organisieren, denn mit Eintritt der Dunkelheit stellen die Deutschen den Verkehr auf den Straßen, besonders in Waldgegenden, ein. Die Faschisten fürchten den Partisanen.

Um dem Feinde Verpflegung und Munition zu entreißen, sind die Ueberfälle aus dem Hinterhalt tunlichst ohne überflüssigen Lärm durchzuführen. Möglichst wenig unnötige Schießerei, Explosionen usw. In diesem Fall ist es günstig, eine Kleinkaliberbüchse anzuwenden: der Knall ist sehr schwach. Mit der Kleinkaliberbüchse kann man stets den Fahrer und den Beifahrer verwunden, um sie später lautlos mit der kalten Waffe zu erschlagen. Es ist sehr günstig, so vorzugehen, denn die Partisanen gewinnen dadurch genügend Zeit, um das erbeutete Kraftfahrzeug oder Kolonne zu entladen und die notwendigen Vorräte möglichst weit fortzuschaffen. Bei einer lauten Schießerei jedoch aus Militär-

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## Anlage

### Allgemeine und spezielle Anweisungen für die „Partisanen“.

a) Aus der Broschüre „Der Gefährte des Partisanen“ (erschienen 1941 im Verlag „Junge Garde“ — Moskau):

„Die Taktik des Partisanenkampfes.“

Das Hauptziel der „Partisanentätigkeit“ ist die Vernichtung der feindlichen Truppen und des Materials der Faschisten. Um in diesem Kampfe Erfolge zu erzielen, beachte folgende Bedingungen:

1. Ueberfälle überraschend, durch unerwarteten Handstreich.
2. Zeige überall eine außerordentliche Zähigkeit; lerne den Feind auf eine sehr kurze Entfernung herankommen zu lassen — 30 bis 20, ja sogar bis 10 m.
3. Mut, der an Frechheit grenzt, ist die Haupteigenschaft des „Partisanen“.
4. Erfinde stets neue Verfahren zur Vernichtung des Feindes. Der „Partisan“ kann nicht nach einer Schablone handeln.
5. Unterhalte eine enge Verbindung mit den sowjetischen „Patrioten“, die in den von den Faschisten okkupierten Dörfern, Kirchdörfern und Städten zurückgeblieben sind.

Unsere „Partisanen“ haben in dem erbitterten Kampf mit den faschistischen Eindringlingen bereits nicht wenig Erfahrung gesammelt. Diese Erfahrung gibt den Partisanenabteilungen die Möglichkeit, mit großem Erfolg unter Schonung ihrer Kräfte und Menschen tätig zu sein.

Organisiere eine sorgfältige Erkundung des Gegners. Erforsche die Wege, die Art und Weise seiner Bewegung, die

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waffen schicken die faschistischen Garnisonen unverzüglich Kraftfahrzeuge mit Soldaten der erbeuteten Kolonne zu Hilfe.

Die Partisanenabteilungen führen Ueberfälle auf feindliche Garnisonen, Stäbe, Funkstationen, Flugplätze und Artillerieparks, die in bevölkerten Ortschaften liegen, durch. Bei dieser Aktion sind folgende Regeln zu beachten:

- a) Führe eine sorgfältige Erkundung durch. Stelle genau fest, wo das Ueberfallobjekt liegt, wie es bewacht wird, wo sich die feindlichen Posten, die Feldwachen und Horchposten gewöhnlich befinden, wo die Offiziere untergebracht und die Maschinengewehre aufgestellt sind. Prüfe dir gut alle geschützten Annarschwege zu dieser Stelle ein, nütze Wälder, Gestrüpp, Hügel und Schluchten aus.
- b) Der Führer der Abteilung arbeitet einen ausführlichen Gefechtsplan aus. Jede Gliederung der Abteilung, jeder Soldat muß genau und präzise wissen, in welchem Abschnitt er eingesetzt wird und was er ausdrücklich zu tun hat.
- c) Es ist notwendig, den Ueberfall plötzlich durchzuführen und eine möglichst große Panik bei dem Feinde hervorzurufen. Daher muß man gleichzeitig alle wichtigen Abschnitte überfallen, in erster Linie die Offizierswohnungen, alle Maschinengewehr- und Granatwerferneister. Um die Panik zu vergrößern, ist nach Möglichkeit das Feuer von allen Enden des Dorfes zu eröffnen, das erweckt bei dem Feinde den Eindruck, er sei umzingelt.
- d) Der Erfolg eines solchen Ueberfalls hängt vielfach von der engen Verbindung der Partisanenabteilung mit der Ortsbevölkerung ab. Diese kann den Partisanen eine gewaltige Hilfe erweisen. Von den Ortsbewohnern erlangt man eingehende Auskunft über den Gegner. Der Ortsbewohner ist der beste Führer für den Partisanen.
- e) Der Ueberfall ist am vorteilhaftesten nachts, kurz vor Morgengrauen durchzuführen.
- f) Gleich zu Beginn des Ueberfalls ist es notwendig, die Verbindung des Gegners mit den benachbarten Garnisonen zu zerstören. Zerreiße, zerschneide oder verursache Kurz-

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schluß aller Drähte der Fernsprech- oder Telegrafenv Verbindung.

- g) Da ähnliche Ueberfälle nachts durchgeführt werden, ist es notwendig, die Aktionen der einzelnen Gliederungen der Abteilung untereinander, wie auch mit dem Kommandeur genau in Einklang zu bringen. In diesem Falle muß „die lebende Verbindung“ in Kraft treten:

jeder Soldat kennt die für diesen Fall ausgegebene Parole. Es ist wichtig, den Sammelplatz richtig zu wählen. Dort hat man sich in kleinen Gruppen zu sammeln, unbedingt aber zum festgesetzten Zeitpunkt. Ein gutes Kampfmittel für einen solchen Ueberfall ist die Granate. Werfe sie in die Fenster der Häuser, die vom Feind belegt sind, in Ställe, Kasernen, Pferdeställe usw.

Nutze jede sich bietende Gelegenheit aus, um die Brennstoffvorräte des Feindes mit allen dir zugänglichen Mitteln zu vernichten.

Bringe feindliche Militärzüge zur Entgleisung, reiße Eisenbahnschienen, Weichen usw. auf.

Eine äußerst wichtige Aufgabe für die Partisanenabteilung ist die systematische Störung der Verbindung im Rücken des Feindes. Suche die Leitungen, stelle ihre Bestimmung fest und organisiere ihre Beschädigung — verursache Kurzschluß, reiße ab und zerschneide sie täglich und nicht nur an einer Stelle, sondern an verschiedenen Stellen. Säge Masten an, besonders in waldloser Gegend, wo diese schwer zu erneuern sind.

Alle Arten des Partisanenkampfes aufzuzählen, ist unmöglich. Diese hängen von vielen Ursachen — von den örtlichen Bedingungen, von der allgemeinen militärischen und politischen Lage sowie von der Umsichtigkeit der Kommandeure ab. Denke an eins:

Das Grundgebot des Partisanen lautet:

Angreifen, angreifen und wiederum angreifen.

Wenn du schlaff handelst und auf einer Stelle hocken wirst, so vergeudest du unnötig deine Kräfte und lieferst dich selber dem Feinde aus. Entschlossenheit, aktive Angriffstätigkeit — ist der Unterpfand des Erfolges im Partisanenkampf.

der Arbeit nicht behindern und du kannst es trotzdem leicht erreichen. Drehe dich, ohne den Kopf zu heben, auf die linke Seite. Häufe den Rasen und die Erde zuerst vor dir auf, damit du dir eine Brustwehr schaffst, die dich gegen das feindliche Feuer schützt und dir außerdem eine Stütze zum Zielen bietet. Dann wirf das Erdreich auf beiden Seiten auf. Tarne die Brustwehr je nach der Landschaft.

Zu 2. „An der Seite, auf die der Baum fallen soll, hackt man den Baum bis zu  $\frac{1}{4}$  seiner Stärke ein. Auf der entgegengesetzten Seite hackt man etwas höher solange zu, bis der Baum von einem Stoß mit der Hand umfällt. Beim Fällen mit einer Säge hackt man den Baum wie gewöhnlich ein, sägt ihn aber auf der anderen Seite an. Wenn die Säge vollständig im Baum verschwunden ist, treibt man einen Keil hinterher, damit sich die Säge nicht festklemmt.“

Zu 3. „Fernsprech-, Telegraf- und elektrische Leitungen zerstört man, indem man Bäume umlegt und sie auf die Leitung fallen läßt. Noch besser beschädigt man Leitungen mittels folgender einfacher Vorrichtung. Man befestigt einen Stein oder ähnliches an einer langen, festen Schnur, die man über Drähte wirft. Die Schnur wird sich um die Drähte wickeln und man braucht sie nur noch etwas anzuziehen, um die Drähte zum Zerreißen zu bringen. In der Mitte zwischen zwei Telegrafentangen zerreißen die Drähte am leichtesten.

Um Hochspannungsleitungen zu beschädigen, genügt es, eine Verbindung mit der Erde herzustellen. Zu diesem Zweck nimmt man einen Draht, an dessen Ende man einen Stein befestigt. Das andere Ende wird in feuchtes Erdreich eingegraben. Dann wirft man das mit dem Stein beschwerte Ende des Drahtes über die Leitung. Damit Du nicht selbst vom Strom getroffen wirst, vergräbt sich, den Draht loszulassen, bevor er die Leitung berührt.“

Zu 4. „Spreng im feindlichen Hinterland Brücken, Eisenbahnlinien, Landstraßen, Lager, Werkstätten usw. Bringe Minen an, wo es nur irgend möglich ist. Achte darauf, daß bei der Sprengung möglichst viele Menschen und feindliches Material vernichtet werden. Am häufigsten wirst Du es mit folgenden Sprengstoffen zu tun haben: Tetryl, das es in drei verschiedenen Formen gibt, und zwar als hellgelbes Pulver,

- b) Am 17. 5. 42 erfolgte die Sendung:

#### „Die besten Tarnungsmöglichkeiten“

mit Einzelheiten für die Tarnung gegen Flieger- und Feindsicht, die Anpassung im Gelände u. ä.

Die Sendung wies insbesondere auf die Schattentarnung hin, die sowohl bei Tage als auch in der Nacht angewendet werden muß. „Wirst Du jedoch von Fliegern unerwartet gesichtet und entdeckt und in der Nähe befindet sich kein Schatten, so wirf Dich flach auf die Erde. Behalte die Grundregel: Bewege dich nicht solange ein Flieger über dir kreist. Eine wichtige Voraussetzung ist die künstliche Anpassung an die Umgebung. Verstecke dich hinter jedem natürlichen Hindernis. Ruckartige Bewegungen werden vom Feind sofort erkannt. Stecke niemals den Kopf aus einer Dachluke oder aus einem Fenster, sondern halte dich stets im dunklen Hintergrund des Raumes auf. Tritt nicht aus dem Wald heraus, sondern bleibe stets im Innern des Waldes und suche Schutz hinter einem Baum. Vermeide Wege, auf denen der Feind dich entdecken könnte. Sogar in der Nacht scheinen die Wege wie weiße Bänder, und jede Bewegung auf ihnen kann vom Feinde erspäht werden. Tarne Dich mit Gras, Stroh oder Schilf. Benutze aber stets Tarnmaterial aus Deiner Umgebung.

- c) Weitere Ratschläge enthielt der Vortrag am 19. 5. 42, und zwar über die Fragen:

1. Wie grabe ich mich ein?
2. Wie fällt man einen Baum?
3. Wie beschädigt man eine Leitung?
4. Welche Sprengmittel verwende ich? Wozu?
5. Wie verfare ich bei Sprengungen?
6. Wie werden Minen verwendet?

Im einzelnen wird hierzu angeführt:

Zu 1. „Lerne, Dich schnell und gut unter dem feindlichen Feuer einzugraben. Vor dem Eingraben mußt Du feststellen, ob der gewählte Platz auch zum Schießen geeignet ist. Lege das Gewehr mit dem Schloß nach oben rechts von dir auf die Entfernung des ausgestreckten Armes hin. So wird es dich bei

unter Berücksichtigung aller feststehenden Regeln ausgeführt werden. Nähere dich einer explodierten Ladung nicht vor Ablauf von 15 Minuten. Explodiert eine Ladung überhaupt nicht, so gehe nicht vor Ablauf von 2 Stunden heran.“

Zu 6. Sprengungen können auch auf automatischem Wege vorgenommen werden, z. B. genau dann, wenn der Gegner ein bestimmtes Gebiet passiert. Es können Minen verwendet werden, die entweder auf Druck reagieren oder durch Zeitzündung zur Explosion gebracht werden. Druckminen z. B. explodieren, wenn das Rad eines Wagens oder der Fuß eines Menschen oder die Kette eines Panzers die Stelle passiert, in der die Mine in das Erdreich vergraben ist.

Bei Minen mit Zeitzündung ist ein Ende des Drahtes an dem Sprengzünder und das andere 5 bis 20 m hoch an einem Baum oder sonstigen Gegenstand festgemacht. Berührt ein Wagen oder ein Mensch die Schnur so kommt es zur Exzlosion.

Waldwege kann man sperren, indem man Bäume fällt, die erst vom Feind weggeräumt werden müssen. Hat man in den gefällten Bäumen Sprengladungen angebracht, so explodieren diese bei der Berührung durch den Feind.

Wie sollen nun Minen und Sprengkörper angebracht werden? Verwende Minen oder Sprengkörper auf Landstraßen oder Fahrwegen, die vom Feind benutzt werden und nur schwer umfahren werden können. Verwende zu diesem Zweck eine Sprengstoffmenge von 5 bis 100 kg und lege sie 1 bis 2 m tief in die Erde. Stellen, an denen Sprengkörper verscharrt sind, müssen daher auf das Genaueste getarnt sein.

Du kannst auch auf der Straße eine Steinsprengsperre anlegen. Bei der Sprengung einer Sprengstoffmenge von 30 bis 50 kg fliegt der Steinhaufen in die Luft, und die feindlichen Soldaten und Maschinen werden bis auf eine Entfernung von 200 bis 300 Metern von den Steinen getroffen.

Die Anbringung des Sprengkörpers in einem Bohrloch erfordert zwar weniger Sprengstoff, aber umso mehr Zeit. Verteile die Sprengkörper bei der Sprengung einer Brücke an verschiedene Stellen und verbinde sie untereinander mit einer Sprengschnur. Denke stets daran, daß nicht gesprengte Stützen dem Feind bei der Wiederherstellung der Brücke von Nutzen sind.



Ein Mittel zur Bekämpfung von Panzern ist die Tankmine, die nach einem bestimmten System und gut getarnt auf einem möglichen Anmarschweg von Panzern ausgelegt wird."

d) Am 22.5.42 befahte sich eine Sendung mit den Regeln des Partisanenvormarsches. Die Sendung enthielt folgende Ausführungen:

"Bekanntlich schützt der Wald, besonders der Mischwald, gut vor Feindsicht. Beim Vormarsch im Walde beachte folgende Regeln: Halte ständig Umschau nach beiden Seiten und nach vorn, besonders aber, wenn du dich Schneisen, Wegen oder dem Waldrande nährst. Ist eine ganze Abteilung auf dem Marsch, so müssen einige Leute vorausgesandt werden. Sie dürfen aber niemals außer Sicht kommen und nicht zusammengehen, sondern einzeln und hintereinander. Tritt nicht auf dicke Äste, reiße mit dem Gewehr keine Zweige an und sprich nicht. Wurf unterwegs kein Papier, keine Zigarettreste und keine Streichhölzer fort. Der Feind erkennt daraus, wer durch den Wald marschiert ist."

Wenn Du Ortschaften passieren mußt, so benutze dafür die Nacht. Ueberschreite nach Möglichkeit die Straßen an einer Stelle, an der an beiden Seiten Baumschutz besteht. Ueberschreite Lichtungen so schnell wie möglich."

Den Marschpausen muß man viel Aufmerksamkeit widmen. Lege große Marschpausen nach vier bis fünf Marschstunden ein. Eine kleine Marschpause kann schon nach 50 Minuten angeordnet werden. Es ist stets von Vorteil, lieber 10 bis 15 Minuten länger zu marschieren, dafür aber einen besser geschützten Ruheplatz zu wählen. Die erste Pause legt man ein, nachdem etwa 2 km marschiert ist. Jetzt stellen sich schon die kleinen Unzulänglichkeiten im Sitz der Uniform und beim Tragen der Waffen heraus. Nimm das Gewehr ab, wenn es die Verhältnisse erlauben, wickle die Fußlappen aufs neue und lege dich auf den Rücken. Lege die Beine hoch, damit die Müdigkeitserscheinungen schnell verschwinden. Wasche dich gründlich, besser noch, nimm ein Bad. Niemals jedoch sollen sich alle Mannschaften gleichzeitig ausziehen."

Das Nachtlager muß eine Stunde vor Dunkelheit ausgewählt werden. Erst wenn du dich vergewissert hast, daß

sich kein Feind in der Nähe befindet, daß keine unübersichtlichen Wege oder Lichtungen oder besetzte Ortschaften in der Umgebung liegen, schreite zum Aufschlagen des Nachtlagers. Stelle Posten aus. Ihr müßt auch dann Posten ausstellen, wenn ihr nur zu zweit oder zu dritt seid."

e) Die Sendung am 24.5.42 brachte Ausführungen über die Vernichtung von Panzerwagen:

"Partisanen und Partisaninnen, vernichtet die deutschen Panzer! Lernt die verwundbaren Stellen der feindlichen Panzer schnell und sicher erkennen und beschädigt sie mit allen Mitteln. Werft Flaschen mit brennbarer Flüssigkeit in die Ritzen der Luftkühlung des Motors! Beschädigt den hinteren Teil der Panzer mit geballten Ladungen, denn dort sitzt der Motor. Zerreißt die Raupenkette durch geschickt geworfene Handgranaten. Zerstört die Beobachtungsgeräte durch gut gezielte Schüsse. Außerdem macht ihr durch wohlgezielte Schüsse in die Schusslöcher die Panzerbesatzung kampfunfähig. . . daß man mit einer Kugel die Turmöffnung festkleben und den Lauf einer Kanone oder eines Maschinengewehrs beschädigen kann. Für den Kampf gegen Panzer gibt es besondere Panzerabwehrgranaten. Verwendet sie! Wenn ihr keine habt, so erbeutet sie bei deutschen Soldaten und Offizieren. Denkt daran, Genossen, daß ein Panzer ohne Brennstoff unwirksam ist. Sprengt und setzt deshalb Brennstofflager in Brand und stört den Antransport von Treibstoff. Sprengt Treibstofflager. Kommandeure und Kommissare der Partisanenverbände, organisiert die Ausbildung eurer Einheiten für den Kampf mit Feindpanzern. Zieht in euren Abteilungen Gruppen von unerschrockenen Panzervernichtern heran. Im Zusammenwirken mit der angreifenden Roten Armee werden die Partisanen und Partisaninnen im weiten feindlichen Hinterland den deutschen Panzertruppen neue und vernichtende Schläge zufügen."

Anschließend gibt der Sender Auszüge aus dem zum 1. Mai erlassenen Befehl Stalins an die Partisanen und Partisaninnen, dessen Hauptforderungen in folgenden Sätzen bestehen:

"Erfüllt euren Partisaneneid.  
Haltet eiserne Disziplin.  
Wahrt euer Partisanengeheimnis.  
Handhabt eure Waffen vollendet.  
Werbt für die Partisanenverbände."

f) Am 26.5.42 behandelte ein weiterer Vortrag die „Panzerbüchse, Muster „Kischkirow“."

"Die Panzerbüchse als Kampfmittel gegen feindliche Panzer hat an allen Fronten eine sehr schnelle Verbreitung gefunden. Die Panzerbüchse kommt überall da zum Einsatz, wo Artillerie nicht zur Verfügung steht. Die Munition von Panzerbüchsen durchschlägt auf eine Entfernung von 100 bis 200 m mit Leichtigkeit die Panzerung feindlicher Tanks. Mit dieser Waffe kann man mit ein bis zwei Schüssen einen feindlichen Panzer außer Gefecht setzen."

Die ausgezeichnete sowjetrussische Panzerbüchse Muster „Kischkirow“ (?), die die Heimat dir anvertraute, ist dann nur eine mächtige Waffe, wenn du die Aufgaben erfüllst, die dir Genosse Stalin gestellt hat. Präge dir genau ein, wie du mit der dir anvertrauten Waffe umzugehen hast."

Sei beherzt, laß die Panzer auf mindestens 200 m herankommen, bevor du deinen Schuß sicher anbringst. Die günstigste Entfernung für den Beschuß eines Panzers ist 100 bis 200 m. Den Panzer dicht herankommen lassen, ist das Gebot für die tapferen sowjetischen Tankgewehrschützen. Die Durchschlagskraft der Panzerbüchse vom Muster „Kischkirow“ ist gewaltig. Man kann damit acht bis zehn Schuß in der Minute abgeben. Um jedoch das Schnellfeuern mit Erfolg durchzuführen, ist ein genaues Eingespültsein zwischen den Schützen I und II notwendig. Die Aufgabe des Richtschützen besteht im Öffnen und Schließen des Verschlusses sowie im Richten und Abdrücken. Dem Schützen II obliegt das Laden und das Vorbereiten der Munition."

Paß gut auf, wenn der Unterführer das Ziel angibt. Bei selbständigem Zielen mußt du das Ziel selbst ausmachen. Achte darauf, daß bei einer Entfernung von 400 m der Einfluß des Seitenwindes so unerheblich ist, daß er die Treffsicherheit nicht in Mitleidenschaft zieht. Berücksichtige die

Geschwindigkeit des Panzers. Wenn der Tank sich mit 36 km Stundengeschwindigkeit fortbewegt, stelle die entsprechenden Zielvorrichtungen ein: auf 100 m einen Meter, auf 200 m zwei Meter, 300 m drei Meter usw. Wenn der Panzer nur eine Geschwindigkeit von 18 km pro Stunde hat, stelle die Zielvorrichtung auf den halben Wert ein. Ziele auf den rückwärtigen Teil des Panzerturmes; dort befindet sich der Schütze und die Munition, und der Tank wird nach dem Einschlag sofort explodieren. Im hinteren Teil des Panzers befindet sich der Motor; wenn dieser getroffen wird, bleibt der Panzer liegen. Denke daran, daß ein aus guter Deckung abgeschossener Feindpanzer das Vorrücken einer ganzen feindlichen Panzer Einheit auf der Straße aufhalten kann."

g) In der Sendung am 27.5.42 wurde nochmals auf die Bedeutung der Spähtrupptätigkeit im Rahmen der Erkundung des Gegners und der Gesamtaufklärung hingewiesen."

"Um den Feindwiderstand zu brechen und rascher voran zu kommen, muß eine gute organisierte Spähtrupptätigkeit ständig vorgenommen werden. Nur gute Aufklärung ermöglicht einen planmäßigen Angriff, der mit dem geringsten Einsatz von Kräften den Feindwiderstand bricht. Truppenteile, bei denen auf Spähtruppunternehmen kein Wert gelegt wird, müssen ihre Nachlässigkeit mit unnütz vergossenem Blut bezahlen. Die Aufklärung hilft dem Kommandeur und ermöglicht ihm, die Absichten des Feindes zu durchkreuzen und unerwartete feindliche Angriffe abzuschlagen, wie auch schwache Stellen in den gegnerischen Linien aufzudecken. Das Zusammenwirken der regulären Truppen mit den Partisanen wird bei Vorbereitungen zu Kampfoperationen immer häufiger gepflegt. Sobald die Partisanen die Verbindung mit dem Kommandeur des in ihrem Abschnitt operierenden Truppenteils aufgenommen haben, können sie entweder selbständig eine Erkundung vornehmen, an einem Spähtruppunternehmen des Truppenteils teilnehmen oder ein Parallelunternehmen durchführen. Genauigkeit bei der Erkundung ist die Parole."



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Ot-Kommandantantur Elincourt : 30 workers for the Gen.Kdo 11 AK

Ot-Kommandantantur Premont: 20 workers for Gen.Kdo. 11 AK (in Le Catelet)

31 August 1918: alle Ot-Kommandantantur

10<sup>th</sup> August 1918: Mobile Etappen – K 140

8<sup>th</sup> July 1918 Nr41 TagbNr 7487, Der Ort K in Elincourt  
17<sup>th</sup> Juni 1918 An alle Orts  
8 Juni 1918, document 284  
File 34803 - Elincourt (Orts papers)  
28 March 1918, 11 June 1917  
File 35848 - Gruppe Quèant: Generalkommando Garde Reserve Korps Iva Nr 11552 : 17  
August 1917  
E-Befehl vom 9.2.1918, 5<sup>th</sup> Februar 1918.  
4<sup>th</sup> Feb 1918: (III) Spionageverdacht  
30 12. 1917 Ziff 5: Judisches Osterfest  
13 July 1918: (Ib) Nachforschung  
File 34899 - Inspektions-Verordnungsblatt E-I 1: Etappen-Inspektion: Generalleutnant von  
Heyebreck  
Order Nr. 56 10 April 1917, Nr 54 3 April 1917, Nr 48 13 March 1917, Nr 38 6 Feb 1917  
Nr 34 3 Jan 1917, Nr 30 12 January 1917  
File 34901- Inspektions-Verordnungsblatt – Etappen-Inspektion 6.  
5 October 1917 – Blatt Nr 45  
File 34903 – Etappen-Inspektion 6 Armee  
10 September 1917 Etappen-Kommandantur bayer. 54:  
Etappen-Kdtr. Bayer 72 - Co – Major Frhr von Branca co gef Insp 6  
6 May 1917 - III Inspektions Befehl – betreff Uebernahme der Grenzbewachung durch die  
Feldgendarmarie.  
File 34907 - Etappen Inspektion 17  
File 34911 – Orders for the General-Gouvernement  
File 34900 - Etappen-Inspektion 1

#### United States of America

National Archives (NA) of Washington D.C.: College Park, Maryland.

#### Captured German records microfilmed series RG 242:

Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (OKW) series T77 - Wehrwirtschafts-und Rüstungsamt  
(OKW Wi Ru Amt):

Roll 100 – from frame 824112, mobilisation of the Reichsforstministerium.  
Roll 145 – from frame 880050, Reichsforstmeister 1935-42, mobilisation plans.  
Roll 241 – from frame 983589, Technische Nothilfe 1934-40.  
Roll 301 – from frame 1130399, Reichsforstmeister.  
Roll 780 – from 5506284, Wehrmachtsatzplan 1945.  
Roll 787 – from 5515838, treatment of POW's from Warsaw Uprising.  
Rolls 787-788 – from frame 5516335, anti-partisan SS/army co-operation and problems.  
Roll 853 – frames 5598281, 5598882, 5599518 Ritterkreuztrager benefits.

OKW series T77 - OKW Reichs Ministry and Wehrmachtfehrungsstab:

Roll 1418 – from frame 1, Operation *Kugelblitz* against Tito.  
Roll 1419 – from frame 554, Yugoslavia.  
Roll 1419 – from frame 978, Partisans and Slovakia.  
Roll 1429 – from frame 252, partisans.  
Roll 1421 – from frame 635, partisans.

Roll 1421 – from frame 820, Poland and Bialystok.  
Roll 1421 – from frame 952, Poland 1944 and Tito's forces.  
Roll 1423 – from frame 98, partisans in the east.  
Roll 1424 – from frame 570, overall view of partisans on all fronts.  
Roll 1425 – from frame 901, details of dealing with partisans.  
Roll 1426 – from frame 1, Partisans, Yugoslavia.  
Roll 1431 – from frame 1, Feldjäger-Kommando  
Role 1432 – from frame 646, German war crimes preparation.

OKW series T77 - Abwehr papers:

Rolls 1439, 1440, 1507, 1508, 1509 – Major-General Fritz von Gemp files.  
Roll 1443 – from frame 942, Partisan maps for February 1944.  
Roll 1451 – from frame 611, Eisenbahn troops and sabotage reduction.  
Roll 1453 – from frame 917, training for V-manner 1944.  
Roll 1499 – from frame 1087, operations and training against partisans.

OKW T77 - Operational and assessment of results:

Roll 1138 – frames 0000758 to 0000812 - A war diary covers industrial exploitation, the reconstruction program and problems in recruiting labourers, partisan activities and a map of the area of Minsk.  
Roll 1141 – from frame 0000001 von Gottberg operation 1944.  
Roll 1159 – from frame 0000131 Juden action and loss of labour.  
Roll 1163 – from frame 0000980 anti-partisan security in Poland.

Oberkommando des Heeres (OKH) series T78 - Historical Subjects:

Roll 6 - frames 677220 to 677309, occupation records of 1917-18.  
Roll 8 and 9 - frames 679567 to 679575, accreditation for Freikorps membership.  
Roll 13 - frames 686842 to 686967, official use of the WW1 kriegstagebuch.  
Roll 19/20 - from frame 697659, Kriegsgeschichte: Class of 1910/1911; lectures on 1870, Frederick the Great and Napoleon.  
Roll 36 - frames 710411 to 710893, training of an Infantry regiment prior to 1914.  
Roll 368 - frames 6330495 to 6330706; the whole role covers wars from 1866 to 1917 with the emphasis on military history. Frame 6330685 covers civilian losses in the First World War.  
Rolls 504/505 - references to pre WW1 and Prussian Army. The whole of the Prussian Army pre-war name lists.

OKH series T78 – Issues between branches:

Roll 39 - frames 6001230-to end, relations of army and SS 1944.  
Roll 47 /49 - frames 6007305 to 6009030; Staff officers in SS units.  
Roll 117 - frames 6041886 to 6041907; poor performance of LW field-divisions.  
Roll 134 - frames 6063766 to 6063801; W-SS looking for help to get better publicity.  
Roll 272 - frames 6219290 to 6219368; foreigners in the SS - To be copied  
Roll 275 - 6223066 to 6223193, Condor Legion.  
Roll 346 - frames 6304707 to 6304759, W-SS order of battle.  
Roll 350 - frames 6347250 to 6347319, military politics 1942.  
Roll 386 - frames 6353296 to 6353468, Luftwaffe school.  
Roll 396 - frames 6366044 to 6366154, Luftwaffe and SS organisation.  
Roll 409 - frames 6378110 to 6378187, SS and Luftwaffe units.  
Roll 423 - frames 6392967 to 6393026, security units at 1943.

Roll 424 -, frames 6393832 to 6393914, co-operation between all organisations 1938.

Roll 424, frames 6394309 to 6394412, promotion of SS in time of war.

Roll 744, frames 0000002 to end, occupation duties 1938.

Roll 788, frames 0000002 to end, army officers in SS training.

OKH series T78 – Russian Campaign:

Roll 432 - frames 6404636 to 6404642, Schools for leaders of Ost Legions.

Roll 473 - frames 6455161 to 6455676, Bandenlage 1944

Roll 479 - frames 6462597 to 6462622, Luftwaffe in Russia.

OKH T77 series – Partisan related papers:

Polish Partisan rolls

502, 556, 560, 561, 562, 563, 570, 576, 583, 587, 673, 675, 677

Soviet Union partisan rolls

479, 489, 491, 493, 496, 550, 557, 558, 559, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 576, 581, 582, 583 585, 587, 589, 591, 677

Czech partisan rolls

576, 585, 673677

Western partisan rolls

742, 743,

T175 – Captured personal files of RFSS Himmler:

Roll 3 – frame 2503380 to 2503415, Berlin 1 February 1943, Chef der Ordnungspolizei

Roll 4 – frames 2504655 to 2504692, Technische Nothilfe.

Roll 5 – frame 2505229 to 2505231, reference to the part played by the TN in the war and the partisans; a propaganda paper.

Roll 13 - 2515813 to 2515890, Policing Colonies preparation training manual. Provides the background to the preparation for colonialism.

Roll 17 – frames 2520038 to 2520559, SD reports from Russia

Roll 17- 2520786 to 2520808 Posen speech 24 October 1943 to party leaders.

Roll 18 – folder 127, frames 2522423 to 252458, Dirlewanger brigade formed.

Roll 19 - folder 152, Bach and children's clothes

Roll 38 –folder 286, case of Dirlewanger; folder 292, frames 2548286 to 2548295 Eberhard Herff Letters; folder 252, Rossnow captured in the Kovpak operations interrogated.

Roll 60 – folder 345, Poles captured in Uprising used as slave labour.

Roll 62 – folder 350, references to the TN school

Roll 67 – folder 55, Himmler's brother in law in Poland, Dr. Wendler (Governor of Lublin) and Hans Frank; folder 57, disputes between Himmler and Rosenberg; folder 62, SS policy in Poland.

Roll 68 – folder 90, General Plan Ost

Roll 70 – folder 281, anti-partisan operations in Bosnia and in the east; folder 231, Polizei and SS in combat in the east; folder 232, Vortrage Bandenbekämpfung 1943.

Roll 71 - folder 240, Bach-Zelewski in Königsberg and Hitler's decision 1935; folder 244 – Himmler order that captured Italian partisans be used as forced labour 1944.

Roll 74 – folder 332, complete file on Himmler's ban of the word 'partisan' and later correspondence complaining where departments were still using the terminology; folder 329, security regulations 1940-44; folder 253, Orpo 1940-43

Roll 81 – from frame 2601526 to 2601895, folder 227 Banden in the east; folder 228, mass murder by the SS in anti-partisan operations in Sarajevo; frame 2601972 to 2602033, folder 327, provisions for children of partisans.



Roll 83 – folder 0276 Goring's invitation to Himmler on a hunt 1939; frames 2609189 to  
Folder 294 – distribution of Jewish furniture to Bittrich and Keppler (commander of the Das  
Reich Div.).  
Roll 85 – folder 63 - Himmler's Posen speeches 1943.  
Roll 91 – frames 2613363 - Heft 16 Posen October 1943.  
Roll 112 – frames 2636567 to 2636577, Bandenkampf.  
Roll 119 – frame 2644755, 21<sup>st</sup> June 1943 Himmler's orders on Bandenbekämpfung. Then  
the replacement of Daluge by Wünnenberg. Pohl and Daluge discussion 1941. Also  
Juttner's office and SS organisation in the occupied territories 1943.  
Roll 127 – Bach promoted and changing office; Dirlewanger to the east.  
Roll 128 – full copy of the formal instructions for the organisation of the Banden office and  
staff; SS-Army relationship and partisans details.  
Roll 131 – Keitel and Bandit policy letter; also a late war Waffen-SS order of battle.  
Roll 199 – file covers correspondence on the organisation of the office of Chef der Banden, a  
very important hit list that included Göring and Speer.  
Role 222 – this file covered the complete Kolpak operation of 1943; Chef der Banden reports  
to OKW; general papers of the office of Chef der Banden.  
Roll 575 – frame 822-845, possibility of Poles joining the Germans after Russian treachery  
from the Warsaw Uprising.  
Roll 577 – frame 179-375 - Yugoslav anti-partisan operations; frame 1010-to end – anti-  
Communist action by the Gestapo in Germany up to 1940.  
Roll 579 – frames 1-80 – Bosnian Moslems and Partisans. Reports from Einsatzkommando 2  
Sarajevo; frames 150 to 306 – report from KSRFSS on conditions in the east – 1945 – from  
Heeresgruppe Weichsel /Ic T311 rolls 167-171; frames 325-365 – reports from June 1941 of  
Soviet subversion activities; frames 681-1411 – early report on operations in the east 1939.  
Roll 642 – frames 1-129 – Der Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei und des fuer den Distrikt  
Radom, Aussendienststelle Tomaschow. KdSuSD Radom, AuDSt. Tomaszow detailed reports  
of a Polish partisan group called the NSZ fighting Russian partisans. Period 1943 – 1944.  
Roll 643 – frames 1-5 – Personenlicher Stab RFSS 1941-42 anti partisan report.  
Roll 646/647 – Radom Distrikt SS agents in the east. RSHA anti Bolshevik partisans.  
Rolls 654/655 – Distrikt of Radom – anti partisan operations in Poland.

#### Waffen-SS records T354:

Roll 145 - Prinz Eugen Division: (BA MA Series RS 4).  
Roll 146 - Prinz Eugen Division  
Roll 648 - Kampfgruppe von Gottberg (BA MA Series RS 3).  
Roll 649 - Kampfgruppe Gottberg (BA MA Series RS 3).  
Roll 650 - Bandenkampf documents.  
Roll 685 - Papers detailing the SS-Reiter Regiments.

Kurt Daluge series BDC, T580 Rolls 215-230  
15 rolls covering the Orpo.

#### The Bach-Zelewski Interrogations

T1270 roll 1, Interrogations on behalf of the Nuremberg Tribunal (BZ-IMT):  
Evidence Division of the Office, Chief Counsel for War Crimes (OCCWC) Headed up by  
Walter H. Rapp, Chief Prosecutor was Telford Taylor, interrogations:  
(Frames 0288 – 0490):

24 October 1945 – Warsaw Uprising  
 27 November 1945 – Written testimony of Bach-Zelewski  
 29 January 1946 – Pruszkow Collecting Camp  
 26 October 1945 – Various subjects  
 30 October 1945 – Warsaw Uprising  
 9 November 1945 - Attack on Gleiwitz radio station.  
 17 December 1945 - Black Reichswehr.  
 15 January 1945 – Rediscovered his full name Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski  
 17 January 1946 – Various subjects.  
 23 March 1946 - On Himmler's attempt to exterminate the Jews of Europe, Bach said  
 '.....not the Jews but the Slavs.' Wewelsberg etc and NS ideology would lead to genocide.  
 25 March 1946 – The case of his Jewish brother in law.  
 T1019 roll 4, United States War Crimes Trials Interrogations 1946-1949 (BZ-USMT):  
 Evidence Division of the Office, Chief Counsel for War Crimes (OCCWC) Headed up by  
 Walter H. Rapp, Chief Prosecutor was Telford Taylor, interrogations:  
 (Frames 0000 – 0350)  
 15 January 1946 – Various, mainly Warsaw Uprising.  
 17 January 1946 – Bandenbekämpfung.  
 20 January 1946 – Anti-Partisan operations  
 22 August 1945 - HQ Third United States Army Intelligence Center, office of the assistant  
 chief of Staff, G-2, APO 403, Preliminary report upon capture.  
 14 August 1946 - Warsaw Uprising (Summary No. 38)  
 22 September 1946 - Warsaw Uprising.  
 24 September 1946 - Warsaw Uprising.  
 14 February 1947 – Trip report on visit to Poland  
 14 April 1947 - The Hungarian Jews.  
 April 1947 – The Jewish question in Germany.  
 25 June 1947 – Agreement between Generalquartiermeister Wagner and Heydrich.  
 27 June 1947 – The use of the terminology – erschossen (shot); getötet (killed), gezählte  
 Feindtote (enemy dead).

RG 319 IRR Case Files, US Army Intelligence papers, files declassified for this thesis:

Box	Declassification No.	File No.	Subject
5	NND881019	XE019650	GFP Volume 1
5	NND881019	XE019650	GFP Volume 2
7	NND891108	XE020820	SS in Orpo
10	NND891156	XE030317	South West Africa
13	NND856013	XE001893	General Staff I
13	NND856013	XE001893	General Staff II
14	NND856013	XE001893	Gen. Staff III
14	NND856013	XE001893	Gen. Staff IV
33	NND856014	ZB00051	Winiza Massacres
34	NND871005		Extradition officers
37	NND853130	XE008157	SS Personalities
39	NND853108	XE180023	ODESSA
41	NND871005	ZA21083	War Crimes
47	NND871063	HE236605-I96010	Installations
63	NND911082	ZF015110	Vlassov Group
64	NND911081	ZF015116	ODESSA
64	NND911081	ZF015118	Latvian SS

544	NND931114	XE002394	K. Daluege
18A	NND881102	G8005108	G. Berger
4	NND931142	XE131670	K.L. Albrecht

### German Archives

#### Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde

BDC - SS personnel file: Oskar Dirlewanger, Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, Hans-Adolf Prützmann.

NS19/1433 – “Bandenkampf und Sicherheitslage”. Vortrag des Reichsführers-SS bei Hitler auf dem Obersalzberg am 19<sup>th</sup> June 1943.

NS19/1433 – Chef der Bandenkampfverbände.

NS19/1671 – Richtlinien für die verstärkte Bekämpfung des Bandenunwesens im Osten. “Führer-Weisung” Nr.46 vom 18.8.1942 und Stellungnahme von dem Bachs.

NS19/1671 – Aufstellung von Jagdkommandos zur Bandenbekämpfung (Befehl des Kommandostabes Reichsführer-SS) 25<sup>th</sup> August 1942.

NS19/1706 – SS-Befehl vom 21.6.1943 zur Bandenbekämpfung, insbes. Zuständigkeit des Reichsführers-SS und Umwandlung der Dienststelle des “Bevollmächtigter für die Bandenbekämpfung” in “Der Reichsführer-SS und Chef der Deutschen Polizei, Der Chef der Bandenkampfverbände” sowie Ernennung von SS-Obergruppenführer von dem Bach zum Chef der Bandenkampfverbände.

R19/440 - Technische Nothilfe: technical and construction police under the control of Daluege.

R19/137; R19/121; R19/122 - Polizei in the East.

R19/167 – Polizei, Schwarzes Meer

R19/323 - Mixed units in the east

R19/365 - Polizei-Waffenschule

R19/323 - Gendarmes in the east

R19/462 - Bandenkampf and Gendarmes

R19/328 - Luftwaffe security operations.

R19/403 - Luftwaffe and police.

R19/103 - Police regiments including Todt.

R19/304 - Banden Schulen.

R19/153 - Polizei in the KSRFSS

RS20/45b - Kriegstagbuch SS-Obergruppenführer Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski.

#### Bundesarchiv Militärarchiv (BA MA) Freiburg im Breisgau.

The OKW papers are a broad collection covering many NS organisations and bureau.

RH13/v.4 - Wehrmachtakademie Nr. 266/36 g.k. Berlin 5 May 1936

RH13/ v.6 - Wehrmachtakademie Nr. 869/38 g.k. Berlin 1938.

RH13/ v.37 - Refers to a course on German colonies

RH17/ v.2 - ‘The Wehrmacht and the Jew question’ page 28.

RH17/v.15 - Kriegsschule München, Nationalpolitischer Unterricht Handakten Oberst Gareis.

RH/17/v.694 - Late war kriegsschule for officers in the infantry.

RH 22/12 – Bl.13. Anlage zu GenQu807/41 g.Kdos., June 1941. (HSSPF and Police 1941).

RH24-10 /417 - X ArmeeKorps and its correspondence with GFP 501.

RH24-10/418 - a file entitled ‘Zivilbevölkerung’ over the same period as above.

RH 24-10/ 447a - Part of two files referring to the (a) Banditen and (b) Abwehr: period 16 July to October 1944. The 10 Division working with the GFP unit 727 in the Kreis Wilna.

RH27-4 / 47 - 4 Panzer Division 30 April – 25 July 1942

RH27-1 /98 - 18 August to 10 September 1942, 1<sup>st</sup> Panzer Division.

RH48 Geheime Feldpolizei: - /68 file, document 3 organisation including the commander Johann Rattenhuber, an Oberst d. Polizei; SS Standf. And Feldpolizei. Direktor. 187 men in total.

Luftwaffe RL:

RL7 - Oberst Truppenkommando includes Warsaw-554, Warsaw-551; Bandenbekämpfung 609 to 613; Bandenbekämpfung 656 and 657, Einsatz operations.

RL19 LuftgauKommando, Luftgau I, Königsberg (also known as Lw.Befh. Mitte), Commanders, January 1941-August 1943 General der Fl. Putzier; August 1943-August 1944 Gen. D. Fl. Bieneck and August 1944 to February 1945 Gen d. Fl Vierling.

RL20 - Luftwaffe and the partisans, 7- Einsatz, Kriegstagebuch Nr 8 des Kommando des Flugh. Bereichs 7/VI, Terrana, 12 December 1943 to 20 August 1944; 11 Kommando des Flughafenbereichs 4/I (1 Dec. 43 - 10 May 1944), in Königsberg – a small unit kriegstagebuch Nr. 5; No. 12, 21 June, 31 December 1944; 284, The Kolpak (Kovpak) file.

RL23 - Luftbautruppen and police, number 62 Partisanenkampf.

RL31 - Luftwaffe and the partisans; 1 Partisanenkrieg in Bialowies; 2 - LW

Sicherungsбатаillon z.b.V., Anlage 1 zum Kriegstagebuch des Sicherungsбатаillon. d.

LW.z.b.v. (27 July - 3 August 1942); 3 - Anlage 2, zum Kriegstagebuch des

Sicherungsбатаillon. d. Lw. z.b.V report (August 1942 - March 1943); 4 -

Jägersonderkommando d. Lw. Kriegstagebuch 1(5 March 1943 - 20 September 1944); 5 -

Jägersonderkommando der Luftwaffe (6 March 1943 – 3 August 1944) Einsatzbericht für den 12 March 1943.

RL35 - Legion Condor file 3 - bomber operations; 34 - bombings.

RL2II – Training, Sabotage, 175 - Abwehr operations and sabotage.

OKW Records:

OKW RW13 - Wehrmachtakademie files: V4; V6; V37.

RW51/ 16; RM2/1845; RM2/1848; RM20/8; RM2/1426; RW51/28 – Southwest Africa

RW51/26; Msg 101/150; N 103; RW51/9 – East Africa.

RW 5/v - Series of Kriegsministerium Papers from the office of Major General z. V. Gemp; Geheime Nachrichtendienst und Spionageabwehr des Heeres.

RW 41/ 60 - Rückwärtigen; GeneralKommando Rothkirch, Anlagen 1-99, Kriegstagebuch Nr 6 (1.1.44 – 30.6.44).

Prussian Army to 1918:

PH1 - Militarkabinett Prussia from 1800; PH1/ 21 references to security police in the war against Austria 1866

PH2 – War Ministry:

PH2/ 594 - Plunder in France

PH2/ 596 - Civilians under occupation

PH2/ 437 - American civil war

PH2/ 376 - German occupation armies in France.

PH2/ 367 and 368 - Occupations and colonies

PH2/ 291 - espionage

PH2/ 233 , 234, 198, 262 - Geheime Feldpolizei

PH2/ 210 - Boxer Rebellion

PH2/ 286 - Freikorps and civilians.

PH2/ 264/278 - Civil disobedience  
PH2/ 261 - Military Justice  
PH2/ 225 - Evangelist in the army  
PH2/ 231 - Prisoners and religion

Greater General Staff – PH3:

PH3/ 133 - references to Britain in the Boer War  
PH3/ 31 - agreement on course at the Kriegsakademie.  
PH3/ 327 - Russian references.  
PH3/ 326 - Russian references.  
PH3/ 410 - GFP in Russia  
PH3/ 387 - Organisation of the railway troops.  
PH3/ 235 - Organisation of the railways.  
PH3/ 109 - Organisation of the railways.

PH21 – Academies:

PH21/ 91, 49, 50, 51, 52, 48, 93 - The only security school curriculum comes from the infantry schools

PH26 – FreiKorps:

RM 61/v. 6-8 Schliesen Freikorps  
PH5 II/4 - East Prussia  
PH26/ 34 - Schlesien corps  
PH3/ 13 - Grenzschutz Ost  
PH26/ 33 and 39 - Grenzschutz Posen  
PH26/ 24, 22, 25 - Oberschliesen  
PH26/ 17,18,19,20, 26 - Selbstschutz

PH30II - Kaiserliches Generalgouvernement Warschau:

PH30 I / 245 and 246, carry details of occupation and civilians in Belgium.  
PH30 II/ 61, 62, 63, Polish occupation.

OKH:

RH16 - Kriegsakademie.  
N119 - Friedrich Kutzbach; N241 - Hans Meier-Wecker; N78 - Helmuth Graf von Moltke; N86 F - Walther Reinhardt; N216 - Alexander von Salviati; N311 - Hans von Haugwitz.

Schulen des Heeres – RH17:

RH17/ 2 - War School Dresden 1936-38  
RH17/14 - War school during the putsch  
RH17/ 15 - Racial content  
RH17/v693 - Wiener-Neustadt 1945  
RH17/ v694 - 1944 training for cadet officers

Waffen-SS records:

RS3-4/14 - 4<sup>th</sup> SS-Polizei-Division.  
RS4/2 - 2<sup>nd</sup> SS Infantry Brigade, 31 March – 25 June 1942.  
RS4/34 - Kampfgruppe Jeckeln to 14 August 1942  
RS4/1066 - Kampfgruppe Hannibal.  
RS4/1074 - 2<sup>nd</sup> SS Kavallerie Regiment 1963 Nazi Criminal Proceedings.

RS4/1379 - War diary of the Prinz Eugen Mountain artillery regiment.  
RS5/624 - 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> SS divisions.  
RS5/310 to 333 - Bad Tölz.

Bundesarchiv – Zentralnachweisstelle, Kornelimünster  
Officers and men of the Jagersonderkommando der LW Bialowies.  
Names withheld on the grounds of the Bundesarchivgesetz.

Deutsche Dienststelle, Berlin  
Muster rolls and casualty records of the Sicherungsbataillon d. Lw. z.b.V. Feldpostnummer  
L49 006 Luftgaupostamt Königsberg/ PR Namentliche Verlustmeldung (Casualty Lists) - Nr  
1 1-31 August 1942 (27.7 - 29.8.42).

## **II. Unpublished and Published Official Reports, Documents and Books**

### National Archives: Washington DC

RG 338 - Foreign Military Studies Series:

ETHINT-31 – German Strategy; B-029 – Edwin Graf von Rothkirch; B-252 – Bach-Zelewski and the 14<sup>th</sup> SS Corps; B-264 – Combat in Russia; B-269 – German rear areas (Italy); B-397 – SS vs Wehrmacht; B-448 – French Resistance; B-629 – Ernst Rode and SS Headquarters; B-662 – Inhumanity in warfare; B-684 – War in the rear; B-692 – Military tradition; C-029 – Geheime Feldpolizei; C-032 – Guerrilla war; C-035 – The people of the USSR; C-037 – ‘Haunted Forests’ C-043 – Foreign Nationals. D-033 – The Weather in USSR; D-034 – Diseases in Russia; D-057 – Population in the Rear Area; D-097 – Horses in Russia; D-102 – Security duties General von Bechtolsheim; D-106 – Combat in deep snow; D-109 – Measures against strikes; D-129 – Security division; D-130 – The Mud; D-132 – Cavalry in Russia; D-139 – Transport in Russia; D-154 – SS Panzer Grenadier School; D-157 – Protecting supply; D-189 – The Pomeranian Battle; D-201 Luftwaffe in the east; D-231 – Velikiye Luki 1942; D-224 – Communications security; D-249 – AG South security; D-256 – RAD/Luft in the east; D-257 – Anti-Partisan protection of the railways; D-261 – Small scale warfare; D-266 – RAD in Russia; D-270 – Wehrmacht Communications; D-278 – Animal Losses; D-282 – Security Divisions; D-284 – Field training for supply; D-297 – Pripet Marshes; D-338 – Supply in Russia; D-369 – Railways for Kursk; D-370 – Combat Staff Unruh; D-408 – Weichsel. P-008 – Training men; P-009b – Civil Defence Organisation analysed; P-010 – Civil Military relations; P-021 – Training officers; P-041 – German rail transport; P-055a – Partisans – Balkans; P-055b – Partisans – Croatia; P-055c – Partisans – Russia; P-060e – Partisans and small unit tactics; P-071 – Population and Russia; P-116 – Russian Airborne; P-123 – German Occupation; P-125 – Supplying partisans; P-142 – Partisans in the Balkans; P-149 – General von Bechtolsheim. T-19 – Rear area security; T-19a – Rear Area Security. AF-150 – Condor Legion; AF-153 – Luftwaffe in Russia; AF-154 – Luftwaffe in Russia; AF-155 – Luftwaffe in Russia; AF-163 – Close support; AF-169 – Air Training; AF-188 – Civil Defence issues.

### Publications

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